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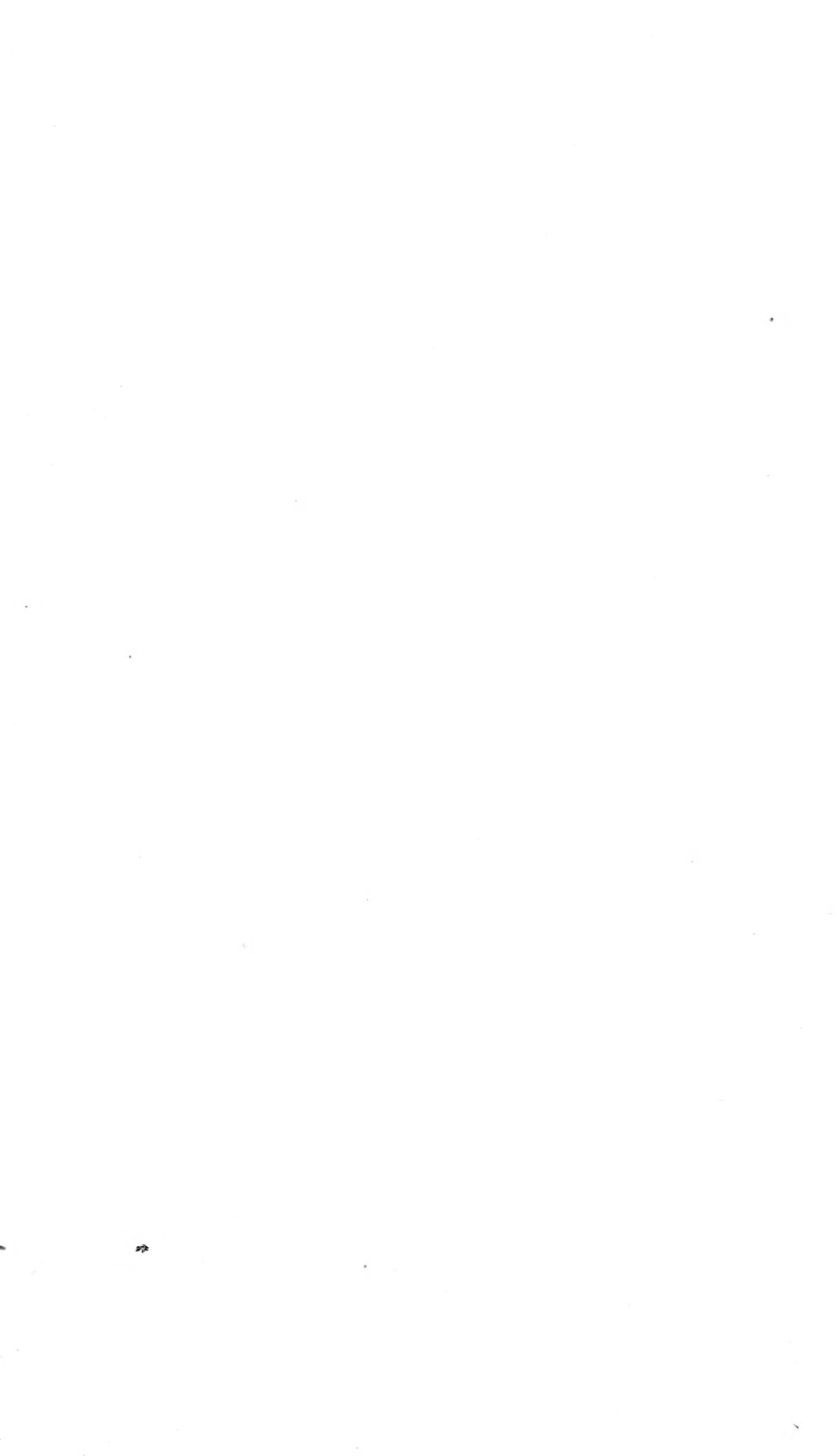
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THE
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
OF
IRELAND
CONSIDERED.



THE
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
OF
I R E L A N D
CONSIDERED.
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS
TO A
N O B L E L O R D.
CONTAINING
AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT
OF THE
AFFAIRS OF THAT KINGDOM,
SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO THIS SUBJECT.

——— *I will awake a higher sense,
A love that grasps the happiness of millions.*

THOMPSON,

D U B L I N:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM HALLHEAD, No. 63, DAME-STREET.

M.DCC.LXXIX.

To the R E A D E R.

THE numerous references in those letters will, it is hoped, be excused, when the motive for giving the reader that trouble is considered. In a subject of great importance an anonymous writer thought he should take too much liberty, in mentioning facts or opinions from himself.

He

He has therefore resorted to the statute books and journals of parliament in both kingdoms, and to some of the most approved commercial authorities among the English writers. The history of those proceedings seems not to be sufficiently understood in either kingdom ; an attempt to collect it from the many journals and acts of parliament, in which it lies dispersed, may possibly assist those who enquire after truth, and wish to form fair and candid conclusions for the good of the whole British Empire. In the consideration of this subject it was necessary

cessary to depart from the chronological order. The great and frequent distresses of Ireland during this century are particularly stated, and carefully examined, through the many different stages of her real poverty and imaginary wealth. From those distresses, as through uniform effects, the causes are traced. The discouragement of the woollen manufactures, by the English act of 1699, as the principal cause, is then considered ; the objections arising from the difference of taxes in the two kingdoms removed ; and the advantages that must arise to Great Britain

Britain by the repeal of this law stated. It is then shewn that no equivalent was given to Ireland for the loss of the woollen trade ; that the encouragement of the linen manufacture was not an equivalent at the time, and if it was, has long ceased to be so. The principle of the act of 1699 is proved not to be justly applicable to Ireland, considered with a view to the natural productions, or to the ancient commercial system of that kingdom ; the many English and Irish statutes which established that system are stated down to the year 1663, when
the

the commercial restraints first began. Those which arise from the plantation laws, and which began in that year, are then considered, and their effects shewn on the manufacture, commerce, and navigation of Ireland. This system of restraints, if it can be supposed to have been reasonable at the time when it was introduced, is proved to be now ruinous to Ireland and to the British empire.

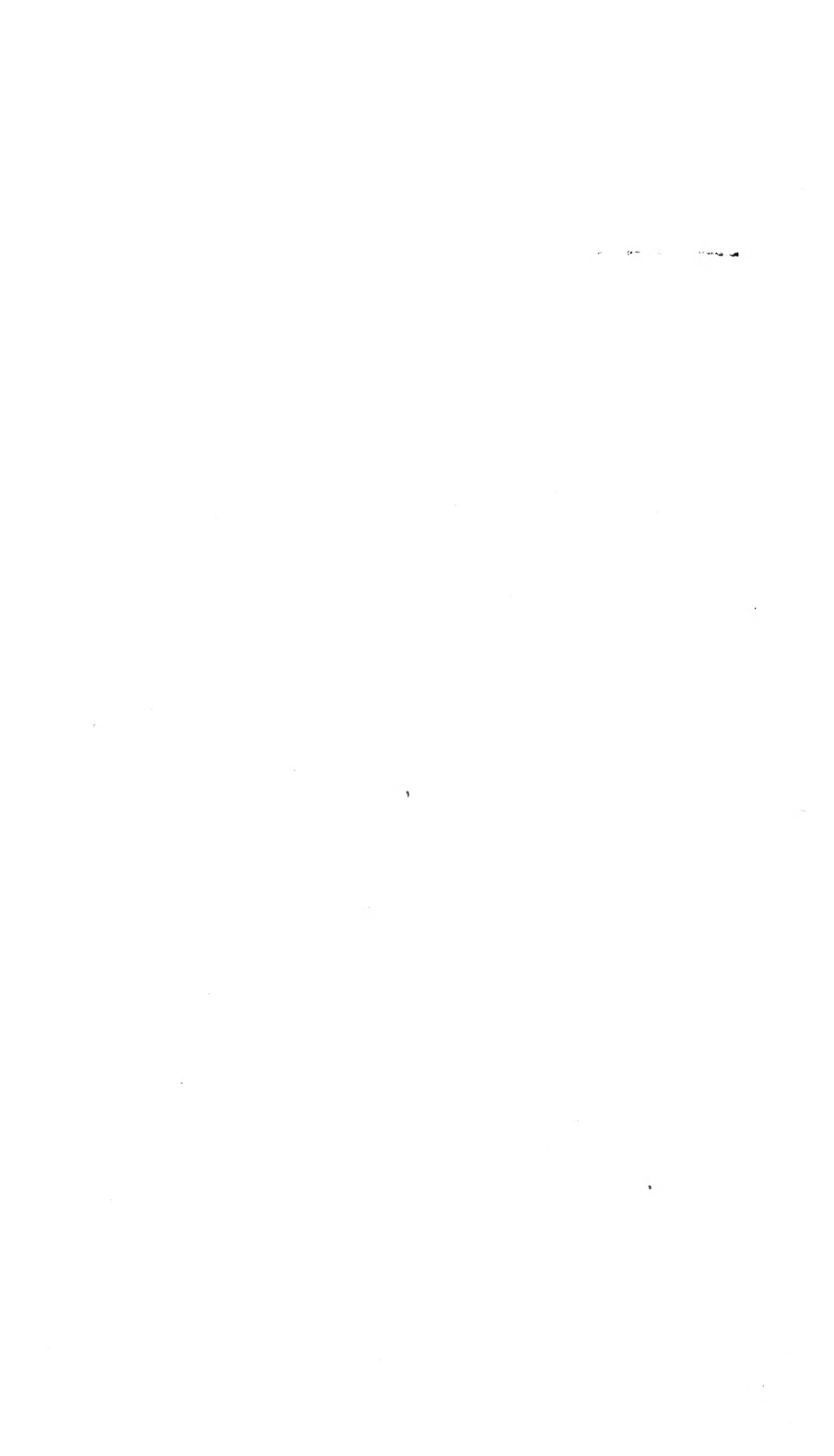
The advantages over Ireland, which Great Britain possesses in every branch of trade and manufacture,
are

are considered in the last place ; and it is shewn that if the act of 1699 was repealed, she would still retain a great superiority in the woollen trade. Several of the many other restrictions, under which Ireland labours, are also mentioned.

The discouragement of the woollen manufactures, and the plantation restraints, are principally insisted upon, because they are thought to be the principal cause of its weakness and poverty ; but it is not presumed to draw any line on a subject under the consideration of the legislature

flatures of both kingdoms. Facts are stated, consequences deduced, observations made, and the principal grievances are pointed out, the remedies are submitted to those who have the power to redress.

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F I R S T L E T T E R.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 20th Aug. 1779.

Y O U desire my thoughts on the affairs of Ireland ; a subject little considered, and consequently not understood in England. The Lords and Commons of Great Britain have addressed his Majesty to take the distressed and impoverished state of this country into consideration ; have called for information, and resolved to pursue effectual methods for promoting the common strength, wealth and commerce of both kingdoms ; and his Majesty has been pleased to express, in his speech from the throne, his entire ap-

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probation of their attention to the present state of Ireland.

The occasion calls for the assistance of every friend to the British empire: those who can give material information are bound to communicate it. The attempt however is full of difficulty; it will require more than ordinary caution to write with such moderation as not to offend the prejudices of one country, and with such freedom as not to wound the feelings of the other.

The present state of Ireland teems with every circumstance of national poverty. Whatever the land produces is greatly reduced in its value: wool is fallen one half in its usual price; wheat one third; black cattle of all kinds in the same proportion, and hides in a much greater: buyers are not had without difficulty at those low rates, and from the principal fairs men commonly return with the commodities they brought there: rents are every where reduced, in many places it is impossible to collect them:
the

the farmers are all distressed, and many of them have failed: when leases expire, tenants are not easily found: the landlord is often obliged to take his lands into his own hands, for want of bidders at reasonable rents, and finds his estate fallen one fourth in its value. The merchant justly complains that all business is at a stand, that he cannot discount his bills, and that neither money nor paper circulates. In this and the last year, above twenty thousand manufacturers, in this metropolis, were reduced to beggary for want of employment; they were for a considerable length of time supported by alms; a part of the contribution came from England, and this assistance was much wanting from the general distress of all ranks of people in this country. Public and private credit are annihilated: parliament, that always raises money in Ireland on easy terms, when there is any to be borrowed in the country, in 1778 gave 7½l. per cent. in annuities, which in 1773 and 1775 were earnestly sought after at 6l. then thought to be a very high rate. The expences of a country, nearly bankrupt,

must

must be inconsiderable ; almost every branch of the revenue has fallen ; and the receipts in the treasury for the two years, ending lady-day, 1779, were less than those for the two years, ending lady-day, 1777, deducting the sums received on account of loans in each period, in a sum of 334,900*l.* 18*s.* 9½*d.* : there was due on the 25th of March last, on the establishments, and for extraordinary expences, an arrear amounting to 373,706*l.* 13*s.* 6½*d.* : a sum of 600,000*l.* will probably be now wanting to supply the deficiencies on the establishments and extraordinary charges of government : and an annual sum of between 50 and 60,000*l.* yearly, to pay interest and annuities : in the last session 466,000*l.* was borrowed ; if the sum wanting could now be raised, the debt would be increased in a sum of above 1,000,000*l.* in less than three years, and if the expences and the revenues should continue the same as in the last two years, there is a probability of an annual deficiency of 300,000*l.* The nation in the last two years has not been able to pay for its own defence ; a militia law,

law,

law, passed in the last session, could not be carried into execution for want of money. Instead of paying forces abroad *, Ireland has not been able in this year to pay the forces kept in the kingdom: it has again relapsed into its ancient state of imbecility, and Great Britain has been lately obliged to send over money to pay the army † which defends this impoverished country.

Our distress and poverty are of the utmost notoriety; the proof does not depend solely upon calculation or estimate, it is palpable in every public and private transaction, and is deeply felt among all orders of our people.

This kingdom has been long declining. The annual deficiency of its revenues for the payment of the public expences, has been, for many years, supplied by borrowing.

* On account of the inability of Ireland, Great Britain since Christmas, 1778, relieved her from the burden of paying forces abroad.

† A sum of 50,000*l.* has been lately sent from England for that purpose.

ing. The American rebellion, which considerably diminished the demand for our linens; an embargo on provisions continued for three years*, and highly injurious to our victualling trade; the increasing drain of remittances to England for rents, salaries, profits of offices, pensions and interest, and for the payment of forces abroad, have made the decline more rapid, but have not occasioned it.

If we are determined to investigate the truth, we must assign a more radical cause: when the human or political body is unsound or infirm, it is in vain to inquire what accidental circumstances appear to have occasioned those maladies which arise from the constitution itself.

If

* By a Proclamation, dated the 3d of February, 1776, on all ships and vessels, laden in any of the ports in this kingdom, with provisions of any kind, but not to extend to ships carrying salted beef, pork, butter and bacon into Great Britain, or provisions to any part of the British empire, except the Colonies mentioned in the said proclamation. 4th of January, 1779, taken off as far as it relates to ships carrying provisions to any of the ports of Europe.

If in a period of fourscore years of profound internal peace, any country shall appear to have often experienced the extremes of poverty and distress; if at the times of her greatest supposed affluence and prosperity, the slightest causes have been sufficient to obstruct her progress, to annihilate her credit, and to spread dejection and dismay among all ranks of her people; and if such a country is blessed with a temperate climate and fruitful soil, abounds with excellent harbours and great rivers, with the necessaries of life and materials of manufacture, and is inhabited by a race of men, brave, active and intelligent, some permanent cause of such disastrous effects must be sought for.

If your vessel is frequently in danger of foundering in the midst of a calm; if by the smallest addition of sail she is near upsetting, let the gale be ever so steady, you would neither reproach the crew, nor accuse the pilot or the master; you would look to the construction of the vessel, and see how she had been originally framed, and whether any new works had been
added

added to her, that retard or endanger her course.

But for such an examination more time and attention are necessary than have been usually bestowed upon this subject in Great Britain; and as I have now the honour to address a person of rank and station in that kingdom on the affairs of Ireland, I should be brief in my first audience, or I may happen never to obtain the favour of a second.

I have the honour to be, my lord, &c.

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T H E
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MY LORD,

Dublin, 23d August, 1779.

IF there is any such permanent cause, from which the frequent distresses of so considerable a part of the British empire have arisen, it is of the utmost consequence that it should be fully explained, and generally understood. Let us endeavour to trace it by its effects; these will manifestly appear by an attentive review of the state of Ireland at different periods.

From the time that king James the First had established a regular administration of
justice

justice in every part of the kingdom, until the rebellion of 1641, which takes in a period of between thirty and forty years, the growth of Ireland was considerable*. In the act recognizing the title of king James, the Lords and Commons acknowledge "that many blessings and benefits had, "within these few years past, been poured "upon this realm †;" and at the end of the parliament in 1615, the commons return thanks for the extraordinary pains taken for the good of this republic, whereby they say "we all of us sit under our own vines, "and the whole realm reapeth the happy "fruits of peace‡." In his reign the little that could be given by the people, was given with general consent§: and received with extraordinary marks of royal favour; he

* Its tranquillity was so well established in 1611, that king James reduced his army in Ireland to 176 horse, and 1450 foot. Additional judges were appointed; circuits established throughout the kingdom, 2d Cox, 17; and Sir John Davis observes, that no nation under the sun loves equal and indifferent justice better than the Irish. Davis, p. 184, 166.

† 13 Jac. ch. i. ‡ 1 Vol. Com. Journ. p. 92.

§ Ib. 61.

he desires the lord-deputy to return them thanks for their subsidy, and for their granting it with universal consent^{*}; and to assure them that he holds his subjects of that kingdom in equal favour with those of his other kingdoms; and that he will be as careful to provide for their prosperous and flourishing state, as for his own person.

Davis, who had served him in great stations in this kingdom, and had visited every province of it, mentions the prosperous state of the country, and that the revenue of the crown, both certain and casual, had been raised to a double proportion. He takes notice how this was effected, “by the
“encouragement given to the maritime
“towns and cities, as well to increase the
“trade of merchandize, as to cherish mechanical arts;” and mentions the consequence, “that the strings of this Irish harp
“were all in tune †.”

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* 1 Vol. Com. Journ. p. 83.

† Davis, p. 1, 193, 194.

In the succeeding reign, Ireland for fourteen or fifteen years appears to have greatly advanced in prosperity. The commons granted in the session of 1634, fix entire subsidies, which they agreed should amount in the collection to 250,000l.*; and the free gifts previously given to king Charles the First, at different times, amounted to 310,000l.†; in the session of 1639, they gave four entire subsidies, and the clergy eight; the customs which had been farmed at 500l. yearly, in the beginning of this reign, were in the progress of it set for 54,000l.

The commodities exported were twice as much in value, as the foreign merchandize imported, and shipping is said to have increased an hundred fold§. Their parliament was encouraged to frame laws conducive

* Cox's Hist. of Ireland, 2 Vol. 61. † Ib.

† Some of these subsidies, from the subsequent times of confusion, were not raised.

‡ Cox, 2d Vol. p. 33.

§ Leland's Hist. of Ireland, 3d Vol. p. 41.

cive to the happiness and prosperity of themselves and their posterities, for the enacting and “consummating” whereof the king passes his royal word; and assures his subjects of Ireland that they were equally of as much respect and dearneſs to him as any others *.

In the ſpeaker’s ſpeech in 1639, when he was offered for approbation to the lord-deputy, he mentions the free and happy condition of the people of Ireland; ſets forth the particulars; and in enumerating the national bleſſings, mentions as one, “that our in-gates and out-gates do ſtand open for trade and traffic†;” and as the lord chancellor declared his excellency’s “high liking of this oration,” it may be conſidered as a fair account of the condition of Ireland at that time. When the commons had afterwards caught the infection of the times, and were little diſpoſed to pay

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* Lord Strafford’s Letters, 2d Vol. p. 297.

† Ir. Com. Journ. 1ſt Vol. p. 228, 229.

compliments, they acknowledge, that this kingdom, when the earl of Strafford obtained the government, “ was in a flourishing, “ wealthy and happy estate*.”

After the restoration, from the time that the acts of settlement and explanation had been fully carried into execution, to the year 1688, Ireland made great advances, and continued, for several years, in a most prosperous condition†. Lands were every where improved; rents were doubled; the kingdom abounded with money; trade flourished to the envy of our neighbours; cities increased exceedingly; many places of the
kingdom

* Lord Clarendon. Cox, ib. Ir. Com. Journ. 1 Vol. p. 280, 311.

† Archbishop King, in his State of the Protestants of Ireland, p. 52, 53, 445, 446. Lord Chief Justice Keating’s Address to James the Second, and his Letter to Sir John Temple, ib.

The prohibition of the exportation of our cattle to England, though a great, was but a temporary distress; and in its consequences greatly promoted the general welfare of this country.

kingdom equalled the improvements of England ; the king's revenue increased proportionably to the advance of the kingdom, which was every day growing, and was *well establiſhed in plenty and wealth* *; manufactures were ſet on foot in divers parts ; the meanest inhabitants were at once enriched and civilized : and this kingdom is then represented to be the most improved and improving spot of ground in Europe. I repeat the words of persons of high rank, great character and superior knowledge, who could not be deceived themselves, and were incapable of deceiving others.

In the former of these periods, parliaments were seldom convened in Ireland ; in the latter, they were suspended for the space of twenty-six years ; during that time the English ministers frequently shewed dispositions unfavourable to the prosperity of this kingdom ; and in the interval

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between

* Lord Sydney's words in his speech from the throne, in 1692, from his own former knowledge of this country. Ir. Com. Journ. 2d Vol. p. 577.

between those two periods, it had been laid waste, and almost depopulated by civil rage and religious fury. And yet, after being blessed with an internal peace of ninety years, and with a succession of five excellent sovereigns, who were most justly the objects of our affection and gratitude, and to whom the people of this country were deservedly dear; after so long and happy an intercourse of protection grace and favour from the crown, and of duty and loyalty from the subjects, it would be difficult to find any subsequent period where so flattering a view has been given of the industry and prosperity of Ireland.

The cause of this prosperity should be mentioned. James, the first duke of Ormond, whose memory should be ever revered by every friend of Ireland, to heal the wound that this country had received by the prohibition of the export of her cattle to England, obtained from Charles the Second a letter*, dated the 23d of March 1667, by
which

* Carte, 2 Vol. p. 342, 344.

which he directed that all restraints upon the exportation of commodities, of the growth or manufacture of Ireland, to foreign parts, should be taken off, but not to interfere with the plantation laws, or the charters to the trading companies, and that this should be notified to his subjects of this kingdom; which was accordingly done by a proclamation from the lord lieutenant and council; and at the same time, by his majesty's permission, they prohibited the importation from Scotland of linen, woollen, and other manufactures and commodities, as drawing large sums of money out of Ireland, and a great hindrance to its manufactures. His grace successfully executed his schemes of national improvement, having by his own constant attention, the exertion of his extensive influence, and the most princely munificence, greatly advanced the woollen, and revived § the linen manufactures, which
 England

§ Lord Strafford laid the foundation of the linen manufacture in Ireland, but the troubles which soon after broke out had entirely stopped the progress of it.

England then encouraged in this kingdom, as a compensation for the loss of that trade of which she had deprived; it and this encouragement, from that time to the revolution, had greatly increased the wealth and promoted the improvement of Ireland.

The tyranny and persecuting policy of James the second † after his arrival in Ireland, ruined its trade and revenue; the many great oppressions which the people suffered during the revolution had occasioned almost the *utter desolation* of the country. § But the nation must have been restored in the reign of William to a considerable degree of strength and vigor: their exertions in raising supplies to a great amount, from the year 1692 to the year 1698, are some proof of it. They taxed their goods, their lands, their persons, in support of a prince whom they justly called their deliverer and defender,
and

† Harris's Life of K. W. 116.

§ The Words of Lord Sydney, in his speech from the throne in 1692. Com. Jour. 2 Vol. 576.

and of a government on which their own preservation depended. Those sums were granted †, not only without murmur, but with the utmost cheerfulness, and without any complaint of the inability, or representation of the distressed state of the country.

The money brought in for the army at the revolution, gave life to all business, and much sooner than could have been expected retrieved the affairs of Ireland. This money furnished capitals for carrying on the manufactures of the kingdom. Our exports increased in 96, 97 and 98, and our imports did not rise in proportion, which occasioned a great balance in our favour; and this increase was owing principally to the woollen manufacture. In the last of those years the balance in favour of Ireland in the account of exports and imports was 419,442l §.

But in the latter end of this reign the political horizon was overcast, the national growth was checked, and the national vigor and industry

† Ir. Com. Jour. 3 Vol. 45 and 65, that great supplies were given during this period. § Dobbs, p. 5, 6, 7, 19.

dustry impaired by the law made in England, restraining, in fact prohibiting the exportation of all woollen manufactures from Ireland. From the time of this prohibition no parliament was held in Ireland until the year 1703. Five years were suffered to pass before any opportunity was given to apply a remedy to the many evils which such a prohibition must necessarily have occasioned. The linen-trade was then not thoroughly established in Ireland; the woollen manufacture was the staple trade, and wool the principal material of that kingdom. The consequences of this prohibition appear in the session of 1703 †. The commons § lay before queen Anne a most affecting representation, containing, to use their own words “a true state of our deplorable condition,” protesting that no groundless discontent was the motive for that application, but a deep sense of the evil state of their country, and of the farther mischiefs they have reason to fear will fall

† Com. Jour. 3 Vol. 45.

§ Ir. Com. Jour. 3 Vol. 65, 66.

fall upon it, if not timely prevented. They set forth the vast decay and loss of its trade, its being almost exhausted of coin, that they are hindered from earning their livelihoods, and from maintaining their own manufactures, that their poor are thereby become very numerous; that great numbers of protestant families have been constrained to remove out of the kingdom, as well into Scotland as into the dominions of foreign princes and states, and that their foreign trade and its returns are under such restrictions and discouragements as to be then become in a manner impracticable, although that kingdom had by its blood and treasure contributed to secure the plantation trade to the people of England.

In a further address to the queen*, laid before the duke of Ormond, then lord lieutenant, by the house with its speaker, they mention the distressed condition of that kingdom, and more especially of the industrious
protestants,

* Com. Jour. 3 Vol. 149.

protestants, by the almost total loss of trade and decay of their manufactures, and to preserve the country from utter ruin, apply for liberty to export their linen manufactures to the plantations.

In a subsequent part of this session *, the commons resolve, that by reason of the great decay of trade and discouragement of the manufactures of this kingdom, many poor tradesmen were reduced to extreme want and beggary. This resolution was *nem. con.* and the speaker, Mr. Broderick, then his majesty's solicitor general, and afterwards lord chancellor, in his speech at the end of the session†, informs the lord lieutenant, that the representation of the commons was, as to the matters contained in it, the unanimous voice and consent of a very full house, and that the soft and gentle terms used by the commons in laying the distressed condition of the kingdom before his majesty, shewed that their complaints proceeded not from querulousness, but

* Ir. Com. Jour. 3 Vol. p. 195.

Ib. 207, 208.

but from a necessity of seeking redress; he adds, “it is to be hoped they may be allowed such a proportion of trade, that they may recover from the great poverty they now lie under;” and in presenting the bill of supply says, the commons have granted it “in time of extreme poverty.” The impoverished state of Ireland, at that time, appears in the speech from the throne at the conclusion of the session, in which it is mentioned that the commons could not then provide for what was owing to the civil and military lists*.

The supply given for two years, commencing at Michaelmas 1703 †, was a sum not exceeding 150,000*l.* which, considering that no parliament was held in Ireland since the year 1698, is at the rate of 30,000*l.*—yearly commencing in 1699, and ending in the year 1705.

The great distress of Ireland, from the year 1699, to the year 1703, and the cause of that distress, cannot be doubted.

Let

* Com. Jour. 3 Vol. p. 210. † Ib. 79, 94.

Let it now be considered, whether the same cause has operated since the year 1703. In the year 1704* it appears, that the commons were not able, from the circumstances of the nation at that time, to make provision for repairing the necessary fortifications; or for arms and ammunition for the public safety: and the difficulties which the kingdom then laboured under, and the decay of trade appear by the addresses of the commons† to the queen, and to the duke of Ormond, then lord lieutenant, who was well acquainted with the state of this country; by the queen's answer‡, and the address of thanks for it,

In the year 1707§, the revenue was deficient for payment of the army, and defraying the charges of government; and the commons promise to supply the deficiency "as far as the present circumstances of the nation will allow."

In

* Com. Jour. 3 Vol. p. 298. † Ib. 225, 266.

‡ Ib. 253, 258. § Ib. 364, 368, 369.

In 1709, it appears * by the unanimous address of the commons to the lord lieutenant, that the kingdom was in an impoverished and exhausted state: in 1711†, they express their approbation of the frugality of the queen's administration, by which their expences were lessened, and by that means the kingdom preserved from taxes, which might have proved too weighty and burthensome. In their address to the lord lieutenant, at the close of the session, they request, that he should represent to her majesty, that they had given all the supplies which her majesty desired, and which they, in their present condition, were able to grant‡: and yet those supplies amounted, for two years, to a sum not exceeding 167,023l. 8s. 5d§; though powder magazines, the council chamber, the treasury office, and other offices were then to be built.

From the short parliament of 1713, nothing can be collected, but that the house
was

* Com. Jour. 3 Vol. p. 573. † Ib. 827. ‡ Ib. 929.
§ Ib. 876.

was inflamed and divided by party dissensions, and that the fear of danger to the succession of the present illustrious family, excluded every other consideration from the minds of the majority.

This last period, from the year 1699 to the death of queen Anne, is marked with the strongest circumstances of national distress and despondency. The representatives of the people, who were the best judges, and several of whom were members of the house of commons before and after these restraints, have assigned the reason. No other can be assigned.

That the woollen manufactures were the great source of industry in Ireland, appears from the Irish statute of the 17th and 18th of Charles II. ch. 15^{*}; from the resolutions

* In the same session an act was made for the advancement of the linen manufacture, which shews that both kingdoms then thought (for these laws came to us through England) that each of these manufactures was to be encouraged in Ireland.

solutions of the commons in 1695*, for regulating those manufactures; the resolutions of the committee of supply in that session†; and from the preamble to the English statute of the 10th and 11th of William III. ch. 10; in which it is recited, that great quantities of those manufactures were made, and were daily increasing in Ireland, and were exported from thence to foreign markets.

Of the exportation of all those manufactures the Irish were at once totally deprived: the linen manufacture, proposed as a substitute, must have required the attention of many years before it could be thoroughly established. What must have been the consequences to Ireland in the mean time? the journals of the commons in queen Anne's reign have informed us. Compare this period with the three former, and you will prove this melancholy truth; that a country

* Ir. Com. Jour. 2 Vol. p. 725. † Ib. 733.

try will sooner recover from the miseries and devastation occasioned by war, invasion, rebellion, massacre, than from laws restraining the commerce, discouraging the manufactures, fettering the industry, and above all breaking the spirits of the people.

It would be injustice not to acknowledge that Great Britain has, for a long series of years, made great exertions to repair the evils arising from these restraints. She has opened her great markets to part of the linen manufacture of Ireland; she has encouraged it by granting, for a great length of time, large sums of her own money † on the exportation of it; and under her protection, and by the persevering industry of our people, this manufacture has attained to a great degree of perfection and prosperity, in some parts of this country. If the kind and constant attention of that great kingdom,

with

† The sums paid on the exportation of Irish linens from Great Britain, at a medium of twenty-nine years, from 1743 to 1773, amount to something under 10,000*l.* yearly.—*Ir. Com. Jour.* 16 Vol. p. 374, the account returned from the inspector general's office in Great Britain.

with which we are connected to this important object; or if the lenient course of time had at length healed those wounds, which commercial jealousy had given to the trade and industry of this country, it would not be a friendly hand to either kingdom that would attempt to open them: but, if upon every accident they bleed anew, they should be carefully examined, and searched to the bottom. If the cause of the poverty and distress of Ireland in the reign of queen Anne has since continued to operate, though not always in so great a degree, yet sufficient frequently to reduce to misery, and constantly to check the growth and impair the strength of that kingdom, and to weaken the force and to reduce the resources of Great Britain; that man ought to be considered as a friend to the British empire, who endeavours to establish this important truth, and to explain a subject so little understood. If in this attempt there shall appear no intention to raise jealousies, inflame discontents, or agitate constitutional questions, it is hoped that those letters may

34 COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS, &c. LET. 2.

be read without prejudice on one side of the water, and without passion or resentment on the other.

I have the honour to be, my lord, &c.

THE

T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
T H I R D L E T T E R.

T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
T H I R D L E T T E R.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 25th August, 1779.

TO an inquirer after truth, history since the year 1699 furnishes very imperfect and often partial views of the affairs of Great Britain and Ireland. The latter has no professed historian of its own since that æra, and is so slightly mentioned in the histories of the former kingdom, that it seems to be introduced rather to shew the accuracy of the accomptant, than as an article to be read and examined; pamphlets are often written to serve occasional purposes, and with an intention to misrepresent; and party writers

ters are not worthy of any regard. We must then endeavour to find some other guide, and look into the best materials for history, by considering the facts as recorded in the journals of parliament; these have evinced the poverty of Ireland for the first fourteen years of this century. That this poverty continued in the year 1716, appears by the unanimous address of the house of commons to George the First*. This address was to congratulate his majesty on his success in extinguishing the rebellion, an occasion most joyful to them, and on which no disagreeable circumstance would have been stated, had not truth and the necessities of their country extorted it from them. A small debt of 16,106*l.* 11*s.* 0½*d.* †, due at Michaelmas 1715, was, by their exertions to strengthen the hands of government in that year, increased at Midsummer 1717 to a sum of 91537*l.* 17*s.* 1½*d.* §, which was considered as such an augmentation of the national

* Com. Jour. 4 Vol. p. 249,

† Ib. 296.

§ Ib. 335.

tional debt, that the lord lieutenant, the duke of Bolton, thought it necessary to take notice in his speech from the throne, that the debt was considerably augmented, and to declare at the same time that his majesty had ordered reductions in the military, and had thought proper to lessen the civil list.

There cannot be a stronger proof of the want of resources in any country, than that a debt of so small an amount should alarm the persons intrusted with the government of it. That those apprehensions were well founded, will appear from the repeated distresses of Ireland, from time to time, for many years afterwards. In 1721, the speech from the throne*, and the addresses to the king and to the lord lieutenant, state, in the strongest terms, the great decay of her trade, and the very low and impoverished state to which she was reduced.

That

* Com. Jour. 4 Vol. p. 694, 700, 701.

That this proceeded, in some measure, from calamities and misfortunes which affected the neighbouring kingdoms, is true : but their effects on Ireland, little interested in the South Sea project, could not be considerable. The poverty under which she laboured, arose principally from her own situation : The lord lieutenant says there is ground to hope that in this session such remedies may be applied, as will restore the nation to a flourishing condition ; and the commons return the king thanks for giving them that opportunity to consider of the best methods for reviving their decayed trade, and making them a flourishing and happy people.

But it is a melancholy proof of the desponding state of this kingdom, that no law whatever was then proposed for encouraging trade or manufactures, or to follow the words of the address, for reviving trade, or making us a flourishing people, unless that for amending the laws as to butter and tallow casks deserves to be so called ; and why ? because it
was

was well understood by both houses of parliament that they had no power to remove those restraints which prohibited trade and discouraged manufactures, and that any application for that purpose would at that time have only offended the people on one side of the channel, without bringing any relief to those on the other. The remedy proposed by government, and partly executed, by directing a commission under the great seal for receiving voluntary subscriptions *, in order to establish a bank, was a scheme to circulate paper without money; and considering that it came so soon after the south sea bubble had burst, it is more surprising that it should have been at first applauded †, than that it was in the same session disliked, censured and abandoned §. The total inefficacy of the remedy proved however the inveteracy of the disease, and furnishes a farther proof of the desperate situation of Ireland, when nothing could be thought of for its relief, but that

* Ir. Com. Jour. 4 Vol. p. 694.

† Ib. 720.

§ Ib. 832.

that paper should circulate without money, trade or manufactures*.

In the following session of 1723, it appears that the condition of our manufacturers, and of the lowest classes of our people, must have been distressed, as the duke of Grafton, in his speech from the throne, particularly recommends to their consideration the finding out of some method for the better employing of the poor†; and though the debt of the nation was no more than 66,318l. 8s. 3¼d.‡ and was less than in the *last* session§, yet the commons thought it necessary to present an address to the king, to give such directions as he, in his great goodness should think proper, to prevent the increase of the debt of the nation. This address was presented|| by the house, with
its

* It is not here intended to enter into the question, whether in different circumstances a national bank might not be useful to Ireland.

† Com. Jour. 5 Vol. p. 12. ‡ 5 Vol. p. 102.

§ It was then 77,261l. 6s. 7 d. 4 Vol. p. 778.

|| Ib. 108.

its speaker, and passed *nem. con.* and was occasioned by the distressed state of the country, and by their apprehensions that it might be further exhausted by the project of Woods's half-pence : it could not be meant as any want of respect to their lord lieutenant, as they had not long since returned him thanks for his wise conduct and frugality in not increasing the debt of the nation* ; this address of the commons, and the lord lieutenant's recommendation for the better employing the poor, seems to be explained by a petition of the woollen-drapers, weavers and clothiers of the city of Dublin, (the principal seat of the woollen manufacture of Ireland) in behalf of themselves and the other drapers, weavers and clothiers of this kingdom, praying relief in relation to the great decay of trade in the woollen manufacture †.

But this address had no effect ; the debt of the nation in the ensuing session of 1725, was

was nearly doubled*; in the speeches from the throne in 1727, Lord Carteret takes notice of our success in the linen trade, and yet observes in 1729, that the revenue had fallen short, and that thereby a considerable arrear was due to the establishment.

But notwithstanding the success of the linen manufacture †, Ireland was in a most miserable condition. The great scarcity of corn had been so universal in this kingdom in the years 1728 and 1729, as to expose thousands of families to the utmost necessities, and even to the danger of famine; many artificers and house-keepers having been obliged to beg for bread in the streets of Dublin. It appeared before the house of commons that the import of corn for one year and six months, ending the 29th day of September, 1729, amounted in value to the sum of 274,000*l.* an amazing sum compared with the circumstances of the kingdom at.

* At midsummer, 1725, it amounted to 119,215*l.* 5*s.* 3*d.* 5 Vol. Com. Jour. p. 282, 295. Ib. 434, 435, 642.

† Ib. 732, 755.

at that time! and the commons resolve that public granaries would greatly contribute to the increasing of tillage, and providing against such wants as have frequently befallen the people of this kingdom, and hereafter may befall them, unless proper precautions shall be taken against so great a calamity.

The great scarcity which happened in the years 28 and 29, and frequently before and since, is a decisive proof that the distresses of this kingdom have been occasioned by the discouragement of manufactures; if the manufacturers have not sufficient employment they cannot buy the superfluous produce of the land; the farmers will be discouraged from tilling, and general distress and poverty must ensue. The consequences of the want of employment among manufacturers and labourers must be more fatal in Ireland than in most other countries; of the numbers of her people it has been computed that 1,887,220 live in houses with but one hearth, and may therefore be reasonably presumed

presumed to belong, for the most part, to those classes.

In the year 1731 * there was a great deficiency in the public revenue, and the national debt had considerably increased. The exhausted kingdom lay under great difficulties by the decay of trade, the scarcity of money and the universal poverty of the country, which the speaker represents in very affecting terms, in offering the money-bills for the royal assent, and adds, "that the commons hope from his majesty's goodness, and his grace's *free* and *impartial* representation of the state and condition of this kingdom, that *they* may enjoy a *share* of the blessings of public tranquillity, by the increase of their trade and the encouragement of their manufactures."

But in the next session, of 1733, they are told in the speech from the throne, what this share was to be. The lord lieutenant informs

* Duke of Dorset's speech from the throne, Com. Jour, Vol. p. 12. § Ib. 143.

forms them that the peace cannot fail of contributing to their welfare, by enabling them to improve those branches of trade and manufactures † which *are properly their own*, meaning the trade and manufacture of linen. Whether this idea of property has been preserved inviolate will hereafter appear.

The years 40 and 41 were seasons of great scarcity, and in consequence of the want of wholesome provisions great numbers of our people perished miserably, and the speech from the throne recommends it to both houses to consider of proper measures to prevent the like calamity for the future. The employment of the poor and the encouragement of tillage, are the remedies proposed by the lord lieutenant and approved of by the commons, but no laws for those purposes were introduced, and why they were not affords matter for melancholy conjecture. They could not have been insensible of the miseries of their fellow-creatures; many
thousands

† Com. Jour. 6 v. 189.

§ 7 V. Com. Jour. 214, 220, 222.

thousands of whom were lost in those years, some from absolute want, and many from disorders occasioned by bad provisions. Why was no attempt made for their relief? because the commons knew that the evil was out of their reach, that the poor were not employed because they were discouraged by restrictive laws from working up the materials of their own country, and that agriculture could not be encouraged where the lower classes of the people were not enabled by their industry to purchase the produce of the farmer's labour.

For above forty years after making those restrictive laws * Ireland was always poor and often in great want, distress and misery, § tho' the linen manufacture had made great progress during that time. In the war before the last, she was not able to give any assistance. The duke of Devonshire, in the year 1741, takes

* The act intitled an act for better regulation of partnerships, and to encourage the trade and manufactures of this kingdom, has not a word relative to the latter part of the title.

§ Com. Jour. 6 v. 694, 7 v. 742.

takes notice from the throne, that during a war for the protection of the trade of all his majesty's dominions there had been no increase of the charge of the establishment; and in the year 1745 the country was so little able to bear expence, that lord Chesterfield discouraged and prevented any augmentation of the army, tho' much desired by many gentlemen of the house of commons, from a sense of the great danger that then impended. An influx of money after the peace; and the further success of the linen trade, encreased our wealth, and enabled us to reduce by degrees, and afterwards to discharge the national debt. This was not effected until the first of March 1754*. This debt was occasioned principally by the expences incurred by the rebellion in Great Britain in the year 1715; an unlimited vote

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* The sum remaining due on the loans at lady-day 1753 was 85,585*l* os 9½*d*. The whole credit of the nation to that day was 332,747*l*. 19*s* 1½*d* and, deducting the sums due on the loans, amounted to 247,162*l*. 18*s* 3½*d*. Com. Jour. 9 v. 3, 349, 352.

of credit was then given §. From the lowness of the revenue, and the want of resources, not from any further exertions on the part of the kingdom in point of expence, the debt of 16,106l 11s 0½d due in 1715, was encreased at Lady Day† 1733, to 371,312l 12s 2½d. That government and the house of commons should for such a length of time have considered the reduction and discharge of this debt as an object of so great importance, and that near forty years should have passed, before the constant attention and strictest œconomy of both could have accomplished that purpose, is a strong proof of the weakness and poverty of this country, during that period.

After the payment of this debt, the wealth and ability of Ireland were greatly over-rated, both here and in Great Britain. The consequences of this mistaken opinion were encreased expences on the part of government

§ Com. Jour. vol. 4. 195.

† Com. Jour, vol. 6. 289.

ment and of the country, more than it was able to bear. The strict œconomy of old times was no longer practised. The representatives of the people set the example of profusion, and the ministers of the crown were not backward in following it. A large redundancy of money in the treasury, gave a delusive appearance of national wealth. At Lady Day 1755 the sum in credit to the nation was 471,404l 5s 6d³/₄ ||, and the money remaining in the treasury of the ordinary unappropriated revenue on the 29th day of September 1755*, 457,959l 12s 7d¹/₂. But this great increase of revenue arose from an increase of imports, particularly in the year 1754, by which the kingdom was greatly overstocked, and which raised the revenue in that year 208,309l 19s 2d¹/₄ higher than it was in the year 1748, when the revenue first began to rise considerably †; and though what a nation spends is one method of estimating its wealth, yet a nation, like an indi-

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vidual,

|| Com. Jour. 9 v. 352. * Ib. 332.

† Com. Jour. 10 Vol. 751.

vidual, may live beyond its means, and spend on credit which may far exceed its income. This was the fact as to Ireland in the year 1754, for some years before and for many years after; it appeared in an enquiry before the house of commons in the session of 1755, that many persons had circulated paper to a very great amount, far exceeding not only their own capitals*, but that just proportion which the quantity of paper ought to bear to the national specie. This gave credit to many individuals, who without property became merchant importers, and at the same time increased the receipts of the treasury and lessened the wealth of the kingdom. At the very time that so great a balance was in the treasury, public credit was in a very low way, and the house of commons was employed in preparing a law to restore it. In 54 and 55 three principal banks† had failed,

* Com. Jour. 9 v. 818. † Ib. 819, 829, 846, 865.

‡ March 6, 1754, Thomas Dillon and Richard Ferral, failed. 3d March 1755, William Lennox and George French. Same day John Wilcocks and John Dawson,

failed and the legislature took up much time in enquiring into their affairs, and in framing laws for the relief of their creditors§. Yet in this session, the liberality of the house of commons was excessive. The redundancy in the treasury had in the session of 1753, occasioned a dispute between the crown and the house of commons on the question, whether the king's previous consent was necessary for the application of it. They wished to avoid any future contest of that kind, and were flattered to grant the public money from enlarged views of national improvements. The making rivers navigable, the making and improving harbours, and the improvement of husbandry and other useful arts, were objects worthy of the representatives of the people; and had the faithfulness of the execution answered the goodness of the intention in many instances, the public in general might have had no great reason to complain. Many of those grants prove the poverty of the country.

There

§ There was then no Bankruptcy law in Ireland.

There were not private stocks to carry on the projects of individuals, nor funds sufficient for incorporating and supporting companies, nor profits to be had by the undertakings sufficient to reimburse the money necessary to be expended. The commons therefore advanced the money, for the benefit of the public; and it can never be supposed that they would have continued to do so for above twenty years, if they were not convinced that there were not funds in the hands of individuals sufficient to carry on those useful undertakings, nor trade enough in the kingdom to make adequate returns to the adventurers.

Having gone through more than half the century, it is time to pause. In this long gloomy period, the poverty of Ireland appears to have been misery and desolation, and her wealth a symptom of decline and a prelude to poverty; the low retiring ebb from the spring-tide of deceitful

ceitful prosperity, has left our shores bare, and has opened a waste and desolate prospect of barren sand, and uncultivated country.

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

THE

THE
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
OF
IRELAND
CONSIDERED.
FOURTH LETTER.



T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
F O U R T H L E T T E R.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 27th August, 1779.

THE revenue, for the reasons already given, decreased in 1755†, fell lower in 1756, and still lower in 57. In the last year the vaunted prosperity of Ireland was changed into misery and distress; the lower classes of our people wanted food*; the money arising from

† Com. Jour. 10 v. 751.

* Ib. 10 v. 16. Speech from the throne, and ib. 25, address from the house of commons to the king.

from the extravagance of the rich was freely applied to alleviate the sufferings of the poor†. One of the first steps of the late duke of Bedford's administration, and which reflects honour on his memory, was obtaining a king's letter, dated 3rd March 1757, for 20,000*l*. to be laid out as his grace should think the most likely to afford the most speedy and effectual relief to his majesty's poor subjects of this kingdom. His grace, in his speech from the throne, humanely expresses his wish, that some method might be found out to prevent the calamities that are the consequences of a want of corn, which had been in part felt the last year, and to which this country had been too often exposed; the commons acknowledge that those calamities had been frequently and were too sensibly and fatally experienced in the course of the last year, thank his grace for his early and charitable attention to the necessities of the poor of this country in their late distresses, and make use of those remarkable expressions, "that
"they

† Com. Jour. 10 vol. p. 25, Address from the house of commons to the king.

“ they will most chearfully embrace† every
 “ *practicable* method to promote tillage †,
 They knew that the encouragement of ma-
 nufactures were the effectual means, and
 that these means were not in their power.

The ability of the nation was estimated by
 the money in the treasury, and the pensions
 on the civil establishment, exclusive of
 French, which at Lady-day 1755, were
 38,003l. 15s. od. amounted at Lady-day 57,
 to 49,293l. 15s. od §.

The same ideas were entertained of the
 resources of this country in the session of
 1759. Great Britain had made extraordi-
 nary

† Com. Jour. 10 vol. 25.

† They brought in a law for the encouragement of til-
 lage, which was ineffectual (see post 42) but the preamble
 of that act is a legislative proof of the unhappy condition
 of the poor of this country before that time. The pre-
 amble recites, “ the *extreme* necessity to which the poor
 “ of this kingdom had been too frequently reduced for
 “ want of provisions.”

§ Com. Jour. 10 vol. 285.

nary efforts, and engaged in enormous expences for the protection of the whole empire. This country was in immediate danger of an invasion. Every Irishman was agreed that she should assist Great Britain to the utmost of her ability, but this ability was too highly estimated. The nation abounded rather in loyalty than in wealth†. Our brethren in Great Britain, had, however, formed a different opinion, and surveying their own strength, were incomplete judges of our weakness. A lord lieutenant of too much virtue and magnanimity to speak what he did not think, takes notice from the throne, “of the prosperous state of this
“country, improving daily in its manufactures and commerce||.” His grace had done much to bring it to that state, by obtaining for us some of the best laws* in our books of statutes. But this part of the speech was not taken notice of, either in the address
to

† 11 V. 472, Speaker's speech. || 11 V. 16.

* The acts passed in 58, giving bounties on the land-carriage of corn, and on coals brought to Dublin.

to his majesty, or to his grace, from a house of commons well-disposed to give every mark of duty and respect, and to pay every compliment consistent with truth. The event proved the wisdom of their reserve. The public expences were greatly increased, the pensions on the civil establishment exclusive of French, at Lady-day 1759, amounted to 55,497l. 5s. od.* there was at the same time a great augmentation of military expence†. Six new regiments and a troop were raised in a very short space of time. An unanimous and unlimited address of confidence to his grace‡, a specifick vote of credit for 150,000l.§, which was afterwards provided for in the loan-bill§ of that session, a second vote of credit in the same session for 300,000l.** , the raising the rate of interest paid by government, one per cent. and the payment out of the treasury†† in little more than one year, of 703,957l 3s 1½d‡‡ were

* Com. Jour. 11 Vol. p. 212. † Ib. from 826, to 837.

‡ Vol. 11, p. 141. § Ib. 403. § Ib. 473.

** Ib. 862. †† Ib. ‡‡ Ib. 982, from 25th March 59, to 21st of April 60, exclusive.

were the consequences of those encreased expences. The effects of these exertions were immediately and severely felt by the kingdom. These loans could not be supplied by a poor country, without draining the bankers of their cash; three of the principal houses* among them stopped payment; the three remaining banks in Dublin discounted no paper, and in fact, did no business. Public and private credit, that had been drooping since the year 1754, had now fallen prostrate. At a general meeting of the merchants of Dublin, in April 1760, with several members of the house of commons, the inability of the former to carry on business was universally acknowledged, not from the want of capital, but from the stoppage of all paper circulation, and the refusal of the remaining bankers to discount the bills even of the first houses. The merchants and traders of Dublin, in their petition§ to the house of commons, represented

Clements's, Dawson's and Mitchell's.

§ Com. Jour. 11 Vol. 966. April 15, 1760.

sent " the low state to which public and
 " private credit had been of late reduced in
 " this kingdom, and particularly in this
 " city, of which the successive failures of
 " so many banks, and of private traders in
 " different parts of this kingdom, in so
 " short a time as since October last, were
 " incontestable proofs. The petitioners,
 " sensible that the necessary consequences
 " of these misfortunes must be the loss of
 " foreign trade, the diminution of his ma-
 " jesty's revenue, and what is still more
 " fatal, the decay of the manufactures of
 " this kingdom, have in vain repeatedly
 " attempted to support the sinking credit
 " of the nation by associations and other-
 " wise ; and are satisfied that no resource
 " is now left but what may be expected
 " from the wisdom of parliament, to avert
 " the calamities with which this kingdom is
 " at present threatened."

The committee, to whom it was referred,
 resolve * that they had proved the several
 F matters

* Cem. Jour. 11 Vol. p. 993, 994.

matters alledged in their petition ; that the quantity of paper circulating was not near sufficient for supporting the trade and manufactures of this kingdom ; and that the house should engage, to the first of May 62, for each of the then subsisting banks in Dublin, to the amount of 50,000*l.* for each bank ; and that an address should be presented to the lord lieutenant, to thank his grace for having given directions that banker's notes should be received as cash from the several subscribers to the loan, and that he would be pleased to give directions that their notes should be taken as cash in all payments at the treasury, and by the several collectors for the city and county of Dublin. The house agreed to those resolutions, and to that for giving credit to the banks, *nem. con.*

The speech from the throne takes notice of the care the house of commons had taken for establishing public credit, which the lord lieutenant says he flatters himself will answer the end proposed, and effect that circulation

culation so necessary for carrying on the commerce of the country *.

Those facts are not stated as any imputation on the then chief governor: the vigour of his mind incited him to make the crown as useful as possible to the subject, and the subject to the crown. He succeeded in both, but in the latter part of the experiment the weakness of the country was shewn. The great law which we owe to his interposition, I speak of that which gives a bounty on the land carriage of corn and flour to Dublin †, has saved this country from utter destruction; this law, which reflects the highest honour on the author and promoter, is still a proof of the poverty of that country where such a law is necessary. Its true principle is to bring the market of Dublin to the door of the farmer, and that was done in the year ending the 25th of March 1777 at the expence of 61789l. 18s. 6d. to

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the

* Com. Jour. 11 Vol. p. 1049.

† Brought in by Mr. Pery, the present Speaker.

the public; a large but a most useful and necessary expenditure*. The adoption of this principle proves, what we in this country know to be a certain truth, that there is no other market in Ireland on which the farmer can rely for the certain sale of his corn and flour; a decisive circumstance to shew the wretched state of the manufactures of this kingdom.

In the beginning of the next parliament, the rupture with Spain occasioned a new augmentation of military expence. The ever loyal commons return an address of thanks to the message mentioning the addition of five new battallions†, and unanimously promise to provide for them; and with the same unanimity pass a vote of credit for 200,000l \$. The amount of pensions on the civil establishment, exclusive of
French,

* In the year ending lady-day 1778 it amounted to 71,533l 1s., and in that ending lady-day 1779 to 67864l 8s. 10d.

† Com. Jour. 12 Vol. p. 700. § Ib. 728.

French, had for one year ending the 25th of March 1761 amounted to 64,127l. 5s.† and our manufacturers were then distressed by the expence and havock of a burthen-some war*.

In the year 1762 a national evil made its appearance, which all the exertions of the government and of the legislature have not since been able to eradicate; I mean the risings of the White Boys. They appear in those parts of the kingdom where manufactures are not established, and are a proof of the poverty and want of employment of the lower classes of our people. Lord Northumberland mentions, in his speech from the throne † in 1763, that the means of industry would be the remedy; from whence it seems to follow that the want of those means must be the cause. To attain this great end the commons promise their attention

† Com. Journ. 12 Vol. p. 443.

* Ib. 929, Speech of Lord Hallifax from the throne, 30th April, 1762.

† Ir. Com. Journ. 13 Vol. p. 21.

tion to the protestant charter schools and linen manufacture†. The wretched men, who were guilty of those violations of the law, were too mature for the first, and totally ignorant of the second; but long established usage had given those words a privilege in speeches and addresses to stand for every thing that related to the improvement of Ireland.

The state of pensions remained nearly the same*; by the peace the military expences were considerably reduced; of the military establishment to be provided for in the session 1763, compared with the military establishment as it stood on the 31st of March 1763, the net decrease was 119,037*l.* *os.* 10*d.* per annum; but as a peace establishment it was high, and compared with that of the 31st of March 1756 †, being the year preceding

† *Com. Jour.* 13 Vol. p. 23.

* For a year ending 25th March 1763 they were 66,477*l.* 5*s.*; they afterwards rose to 89,095*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* in September 1777 at the highest; and in this year, ending the 25th March last, amounted to 85,971*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

† *Com. Jour.* 13 Vol. p. 576.

ceding the last war, the annual increase was 110,422l. 9s. 5½d. the debt of the nation at lady-day 1763, and which was entirely incurred in the last war, was 521,161l. 16s. 6¾d.* and would have been much greater if the several lord lieutenants had not used with great œconomy the power of borrowing, which the house of commons had from session to session given them.

That this debt should have been contracted in an expensive war, in which Ireland was called upon for the first time to contribute, is not to be wondered at, but the continual increase of this debt, in sixteen years of peace, should be accounted for.

The same mistaken estimate of the ability of Ireland, that occasioned our being called upon to bear part of the British burthen during the war, produced similar effects at the time of the peace, and after it.

* Com. Jour. 13 Vol. p. 574, 621.

it. The heavy peace establishment was increased by an augmentation of our army in 1769, which induced an additional charge, taking in the expences of exchange and remittance, of 54,118l. 12s. 6d. yearly, for the first year; but this charge was afterwards considerably increased, and amounted from the year 1769 to Christmas 1778, when it was discontinued, to the sum of 620,824l. os. 9½d.; and this increased expence was more felt, because it was for the purpose of paying forces out of this kingdom.

As our expences increased our income diminished; the revenue for the two years, ending the 25th of March 1771 *, was far short of former years, and not nearly sufficient to pay the charges of government, and the sums payable for bounties and public works†. The debt of the nation at lady-day 1771, was increased to 782,320l. os. 0½d¼. The want of income was endeavoured to be supplied by a loan. In the money-bill of the
October

* Com. Jour. 14 Vol. p. 715.

† 15 Vol. p. 710.

‡ Ib. p. 153.

October session 1771, there was a clause empowering government to borrow 200,000*l*. Immediately after the linen trade declined rapidly; in 1772, 1773, and 1774, the decay in that trade was general in every part of the kingdom where it was established; the quantity manufactured was not above two-thirds of what used formerly to be made, and that quantity did not sell for above three-fourths of its former price; the linen and linen yarn exported for one year, ending the 25th of March 1773 †, fell short of the exports of one year, ending the 25th of March 1771, to the amount in value of 788,821*l*. 1*s*. 3*d*. At lady-day 1773 *, the debt increased to 994,890*l*. 10*s*. 10½*d*. The attempt in the session of 1773 †, to equalize the annual income and expences failed, and borrowing on tontine in the sessions of 1773, 1775 and 1777, added greatly to the annual expence, and to the sums of money remitted out of the kingdom. The debt now bearing interest

† Com. Jour. 16 Vol. p. 372. * Ib. p. 190, 191, 192.

† Ib. 256.

interest amounts to the sum of 1,017,600*l.* besides a sum of 740,000*l.* raised on annuities, which amount to 48,900*l.* yearly, with some incidental expences. The great increase of those national burdens, likely to take place in the approaching session, has been already mentioned.

The debt of Ireland has arisen from the following causes: the expences of the late war, the heavy peace establishment in the year 1763, the increase of that establishment in the year 1769, the sums paid from 1759 to forces out of the kingdom, the great increase of pensions and other additional charges on the civil establishment, which however considerable, bears but a small proportion to the increased military expences, the falling of the revenue, and the sums paid for bounties and public works; these are mentioned last, because it is apprehended that they have not operated to increase this debt in so great a degree as some persons have imagined; for though the amount is large, yet no part of the money
was

was sent out of the kingdom, and several of the grants were for useful purposes, some of which made returns to the public and to the treasury exceeding the amount of those grants.)

When those facts are considered, no doubt can be entertained but that the supposed wealth of Ireland has led to real poverty ; and when it is known, that from the year 1751 to Christmas 1778 the sums, remitted by Ireland to pay troops serving abroad, amounted to the sum of 1,401,925*l*. 19*s*. 4*d*. it will be equally clear from whence this poverty has principally arisen.

In those seasons of expence and borrowing, the lower classes were equally subject to poverty and distress, as in the periods of national œconomy. In 1762 lord Hallifax, in his speech from the throne*, acknowledges that our manufactures were distressed by the war. In 1763, the corporation

* Com. Jour. 12 Vol. p. 928.

tion of weavers, by a petition to the house of commons, complain that, notwithstanding the great increase both in number and wealth of the inhabitants of the metropolis, they found a very great decay of several very valuable branches of trade and manufactures * of this city, particularly in the filken and woollen.

In 1765 there was a scarcity caused by the failure of potatoes in general throughout the kingdom, which distressed the common people; the spring corn had also failed, and grain was so high, that it was thought necessary to appoint a committee † to inquire what may be the best method to reduce it; and to prevent a great dearth, two acts were passed early in that session, to stop the distillery, and to prevent the exportation of corn, for a limited time. In spring 1766 those fears appeared to have been well-founded; several towns were in great distress for corn; and by the humanity of the
lord

* Com. Jour. 13 Vol. p. 987.

† Ib. 14 Vol. p. 69, 114, 151.

lord lieutenant, lord Hertford, money was issued out of the treasury to buy corn for such places as applied to his lordship for that relief.

The years 1770 and 1771 were seasons of great distress in Ireland, and in the month of February in the latter year, the high price of corn is mentioned from the throne*, as an object of the first importance, which demanded the utmost attention.

In 1778 and 1779 there was great plenty of corn, but the manufacturers were not able to buy, and many thousands of them were supported by charity; the consequence was that corn fell to so low a price that the farmers in many places were unable to pay their rents, and every where were under great difficulties.

That the linen manufacture has been of the utmost consequence to this country,
that

* Com. Jour. 14 Vol. p. 665.

that it has greatly prospered, that it has been long encouraged by the protection of Great Britain, that whatever wealth Ireland is possessed of arises, for the most part, from that trade, is freely acknowledged; but in far the greatest part of the kingdom it has not yet been established, and many attempts to introduce it have, after long perseverance and great expence, proved fruitless.

Though that manufacture made great advances from 1727 to 1758*, yet the tillage of this kingdom declined during the whole of that period, and we have not since been free from scarcity.

Notwithstanding the success of that manufacture, the bulk of our people have always continued poor, and in a great many seasons have wanted food. Can the history of any other fruitful country on the globe, enjoying peace for fourscore years, and not visited by plague or pestilence, produce so many

* Com. Jour. 16 Vol. p. 467, report from committee, and ib. 501 agreed to by the house, *nem. con.*

many recorded instances of the poverty and wretchedness, and of the reiterated want and misery of the lower orders of the people? There is no such example in ancient or modern story. If the ineffectual endeavours by the representatives of those poor people to give them employment and food, had not left sufficient memorials of their wretchedness; if their habitations, apparel, and food were not sufficient proofs, I should appeal to the human countenance for my voucher, and rest the evidence on that hopeless despondency that hangs on the brow of unemployed industry.

That since the success of the linen manufacture, the money and the rents of Ireland have been greatly increased, is acknowledged; but it is affirmed, and the fact is of notoriety, that the lower orders, not of that trade, are not less wretched. Those employed in the favoured manufacture generally buy from that country to which they principally sell; and the rise in lands is a misfortune to the poor, where their wages
do

do not rise proportionably, which will not happen where manufactures and agriculture are not sufficiently encouraged. Give premiums by land or by water, arrange your exports and imports in what manner you will; if you discourage the people from working up the principal materials of their country, the bulk of that people must ever continue miserable, the growth of the nation will be checked, and the sinews of the state enfeebled.

I have stated a tedious detail of instances, to shew that the sufferings of the lower classes of our people have continued the same (with an exception only of those employed in the linen trade) since the time of queen Anne, as they were during her reign; that the cause remains the same, namely, that our manufacturers have not sufficient employment, and cannot afford to buy from the farmer, and that therefore manufactures and agriculture must both be prejudiced.

After

After revolving those repeated instances, and almost continued chain of distress, for such a series of years, among the inhabitants of a temperate climate, surrounded by the bounties of providence and the means of abundance, and being unable to discover any accidental or natural causes for those evils, we are led to inquire whether they have arisen from the mistaken policy of man.

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

G

T H E



T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
F I F T H L E T T E R.

T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
F I F T H L E T T E R.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 30th Aug. 1779.

EVERY man of discernment, who attends to the facts which have been stated, would conclude, that there must be some political institutions in this country counter-acting the natural course of things, and obstructing the prosperity of the people. Those institutions should be considered, that as from the effects the cause has been traced, this also should be examined, to shew that such consequences are necessarily deducible from it. For several years
the

the exportation of live cattle to England* was the principal trade of Ireland. This was thought most erroneously, † as has since been acknowledged §, to lower the rents of lands in England. From this and perhaps from some less worthy motive ** a law passed in England ††, to restrain and afterwards to prohibit the exportation of cattle from Ireland. The Irish deprived of their principal trade, and reduced to the utmost distress by this prohibition, had no resource but to work up their own commodities, to which they applied themselves with great ardor †‡. After this prohibition they increased their number of sheep, and at the revolution were possessed of very numerous flocks. They had
good

* Carte, 2 vol. 318, 319.

† Sir W. Petty's Political Survey, 69, 70. Sir W. Temple, 3 vol. 22, 23.

§ By several British acts (32 G. 2, ch. 11. 5 G. 3, ch. 10. 12 G. 3, ch. 56.) allowing from time to time the free importation of all sorts of cattle from Ireland.

** Personal prejudice against the duke of Ormond. (2 Carte, 332, 337.

†† 15 Ch. 2, ch. 7. 18 Ch. 2, ch. 2.

‡‡ 2 Carte, 332.

good reasons to think that this object of industry was not only left open, but recommended to them. The ineffectual attempt by lord Strafford in 1639, to prevent the making of broad cloths in Ireland*, the relinquishment of that scheme by never afterwards reviving it, the encouragement given to their woollen manufactures by many English acts of parliament from the reign of Edward the 3d† to the 12th of Ch. 2d, and several of them for the express purpose of exportation; the letter of Charles the 2d, in 1667, with the advice of his privy council in England, and the proclamation in pursuance of that letter, encouraging the exportation of their manufactures to foreign countries; by the Irish statutes of the 13th Hen. 8, ch. 2, 28th Hen. 8, ch. 17, of the 11th Elizabeth, Ch. 10, and 17 and 18 Ch. 2, ch. 15, (all of which, the act of 28 Henry 8th excepted, received the approbation of the privy council of England, having been re-

turned

* Com. Jour. 1 vol. p. 208, by a clause to be inserted in an Irish act.

† See post, those acts stated.

turned under the great seal of that kingdom) afforded as strong grounds of assurance as any country could possess for the continuance of any trade or manufacture.

Great numbers of their flocks had been destroyed at the time of the revolution, but they were replaced at great expence, and became more numerous and flourishing than before. The woollen manufacture was cultivated in Ireland for ages before, and for several years after the revolution, without any appearance of jealousy from England, the attempt by lord Strafford excepted. No discouragement is intimated in any speech from the throne until the year 1698, lord Sydney's in 1692 imparts the contrary, "their
 " majesties, says he*, being in their own royal judgments satisfied that a country so
 " fertile by nature, and so advantageously
 " situated for *trade and navigation*, can want
 " nothing but the blessing of peace, and the
 " help of some good laws to make it as rich
 " and flourishing *as most of its neighbours*; I am
 " ordered to assure you, that nothing shall
 " be

“be wanting on their parts that may contribute to your perfect and lasting happiness.”

Several laws had been made* in England to prevent the exportation of wool, yarn made of wool, fuller’s earth, or any kind of scowering earth or fulling clay from England or Ireland, into any places out of the kingdoms of England or Ireland. But those laws were equally restrictive on both kingdoms.

In the first year† of William and Mary certain ports were mentioned in Ireland, from which only wool should be shipped from that kingdom, and certain ports in England into which only it should be imported; and a register was directed to be kept in the custom-house of London of all the wool, from time to time, imported from Ireland. By a subsequent act in this reign†, passed in 1696, the commissioners or farmers of the customs
in

* English acts, 12 Ch. 2 ch. 32. 13 and 14 Ch. 2 ch. 18.

† 1 W. and M. Ch. 32. † 7 and 8 W. ch. 28.

in Ireland are directed, once in every six months, to transmit to the commissioners of customs in England, an account of all wool exported from Ireland to England, and this last act, in its title, professes the intention of encouraging the importation of wool from Ireland. The prohibition of exporting the materials from either kingdom, except to the other, and the encouragement to export it from Ireland to England, mentioned in the title of the last-mentioned act, but for which no provision seems to be made, unless the designation of particular ports may be so called, was the system that then seemed to be settled, for preventing the wool of Ireland from being prejudicial to England; but the prevention of the exportation of the manufacture was an idea that seemed never to have been entertained until the year 1697, when a bill for that purpose was brought into the English house of commons*, and passed that house; but after great consideration was not passed by the lords in that parliament.

14th Jan. 1697.

parliament †. There does not appear to have been any increase at that time in the woollen manufacture of Ireland, sufficient to have raised any jealousy in England.

By a report from the commissioners of trade in that kingdom, dated on the 23d December 97, and laid before the house of commons, in 1698 they find that the woollen manufacture in Ireland had increased since the year 1665, as follows:

Years.	New draperies Pieces.	Old draperies. Pieces.	Prize Yards.
1665	224	32	444,381
1687	11,360	103	1,129,716
1696	4,413	34 $\frac{2}{4}$	104,167

The bill for restraining the exportation of woollen manufactures from Ireland was brought into the English house of commons on the 23d of Feb. 97, but the law did not pass until the year 1699, in the first session of the new parliament. I have not been able

† 7 July 1698 dissolved

able to obtain an account of the exportation of woollen manufactures for the year 1697 †, but from the 25th of December 1697, to the 25th of December 1698, being the first year in which the exports in books extant, are registered in the custom-house at Dublin, the amount appears to be of

New drapery.	Old drapery.	Frize.
Pieces.	Pieces.	Yds.
23,285 $\frac{1}{2}$	281 $\frac{1}{2}$	666,901

though this encrease of export shews that the trade was advancing in Ireland, yet the total amount or the comparative increase
since

† In a pamphlet cited by Dr. Smith, (v. 2, p. 244.) in his memoirs, of wool it is said that the total value of those manufactures exported in 1697, was 23,614l 9s 6d namely, in frizes and stockings 14,625l 12s; in old and new draperies 8988l 17s 6d, and that though the Irish had been every year increasing yet they had not recovered above one third of the woollen trade which they had before the war (ib. 243). The value in 1687, according to the same authority, was 70,521l 14s, of which the frizes were 56,485l 16s. Stockings 2520l. 18s, and old and new drapery (which it is there said could alone interfere with the English trade) 11,514l 10s.

since 1687 could scarcely “sink the value of
“lands, and tend to the ruin of the trade
“and woollen manufactures of England &.”

The apprehensions of England seem rather to have arisen from the fears of future, than from the experience of any past rivalry in this trade. I have more than once heard lord Bowes, the late chancellor of this kingdom, mention a conversation that he had with sir Robert Walpole on this subject, who assured him that the jealousies entertained in England, of the woollen trade in Ireland, and the restraints of that trade had at first taken their rise from the boasts of some of our countrymen in London, of the great success of that manufacture here. Whatever was the cause, both houses of parliament in England addressed king William, in very strong terms, on this subject; but on considering those addresses they seem to be founded, not on the state at that time of that manufacture here, but the probability
of

of its further increase. As those proceedings are of great importance to two of the principal manufactures of this country, it is thought necessary to state them particularly. The lords represent, “that the *growing* manufacture of cloth in Ireland[‡], both by the cheapness of all sorts of necessaries for life, and *goodness of materials for making all manner of cloth*, doth invite your subjects of England with their families and servants to leave their habitations to settle there, to the increase of the woollen manufacture in Ireland, which makes your loyal subjects in this kingdom very apprehensive that *the further growth* of it may greatly prejudice the said manufacture here; by which the trade of the nation and the value of lands will very much decrease, and the numbers of your people be much lessened here;” they then beseech his majesty “in the most public and effectual way, that may be, to declare to all your subjects of Ireland, that the *growth*”
“and

[‡] 9th June 1698, vol. of lords journals, page 314.

“ and *increase* of the woollen manufacture
 “ hath long, and will ever be looked upon
 “ with jealousy, by all your subjects of this
 “ kingdom; *and if not timely remedied* may
 “ occasion very strict laws, totally to prohi-
 “ bit and suppress the same; and on the
 “ other hand if they turn their industry and
 “ skill, to the settling and improving the
 “ linen manufacture, for which generally
 “ the lands of that kingdom are very pro-
 “ per, they shall receive all countenance, fa-
 “ vour and protection from your *royal influ-*
 “ *ence*, for the encouragement and promo-
 “ ting of the said linen manufacture, to *all*
 “ *the advantage and profit that kingdom can be*
 “ *capable of.*”

King William in his answer says, “his majesty will take care to do what their lordships have desired;” and the lords direct that the lord chancellor should order that the address and answer be forthwith printed and published §.

In

In the address of the commons § they say,
 that “being sensible that the wealth and
 “peace of this kingdom do, in a great mea-
 “sure, depend on preserving the woollen
 “manufacture, as much as possible, *entire*
 “to this realm, they think it becomes them,
 “like their ancestors, to be jealous of the
 “*establishment* and *increase* thereof elsewhere;
 “and to use their utmost endeavours to pre-
 “vent it, and therefore, they cannot with-
 “out trouble observe, that Ireland, depen-
 “dant on, and protected by England in the
 “enjoyment of all they have, and which is
 “so proper for the linen manufacture, the
 “establishment and growth of which there
 “would be so enriching to themselves, and
 “so profitable to England, should *of late*
 “apply itself to the woollen manufacture,
 “to the great prejudice of the trade of this
 “kingdom, and so unwillingly promote the
 “linen trade, which would benefit both
 “them and us.

The

§ 30th June 1698.

“ The consequence whereof will necessitate
 “ your parliament of England to interpose, to
 “ prevent the mischief that *threatens* us, un-
 “ less your majesty, by your authority and
 “ great wisdom, shall find means to secure
 “ the trade of England by making your sub-
 “ jects of Ireland to pursue the joint inter-
 “ est of both kingdoms.”

“ And we do most humbly implore your
 “ majesty’s protection and favour in this
 “ matter; and that you will make it your
 “ royal care, and enjoin all those you em-
 “ ploy in Ireland, to make it their care, and
 “ use their utmost diligence, to hinder the
 “ *exportation of wool* from Ireland, except to
 “ be imported hither, and for the discourag-
 “ ing the woollen manufactures, and encour-
 “ aging the linen manufactures in Ireland,
 “ to which we shall be *always* ready to give
 “ our *utmost* assistance.”

This address was presented to his majesty
 by the house. The answer is explicit. “ I
 “ shall do all that in me lies to discourage
 H “ the

“ the woollen trade in Ireland, and encourage the linen manufacture there; and to promote the trade of England.”

He soon after wrote a letter§ to lord Galway, then one of the lords justices of this kingdom, in which he tells him, “ that it was never of such importance to have at present a good session of parliament, not only in regard to my affairs of that kingdom, but especially of this here. The chief thing that must be tried to be prevented is, that the Irish parliament takes no notice of what has passed in this here†, and that you make effectual laws for the linen manufacture, and discourage *as far as possible* the woollen.” It would be unjust to infer from any of those proceedings that this great prince wanted affection for this country. They were times of party. He was often under the necessity of complying against his own opinion and wishes, and about this time was obliged to send away his favourite

§ 16th July 1698. † Rapin's Hist. v. 17, p. 417.

favourite guards, in compliance with the desire of the commons.

The houses of parliament in England originally intended, that the business should be done in the parliament of Ireland by the exertion of that great and just influence which king William had acquired in that kingdom. On the first day of the following session § the lords justices, in their speech, mention a bill transmitted for the encouragement of the linen and hempen manufactures, which they recommend in the following words, “ the settlement of this
 “ manufacture will contribute much to people the country, and will be found *much*
 “ *more advantageous to this kingdom* than the
 “ woollen manufacture, which being the
 “ settled staple trade of England, *from*
 “ *whence all foreign markets* are supplied, can
 “ never be encouraged *here* for that purpose;
 “ whereas the linen and hempen manufactures will not only be encouraged, as con-

H 2

“ fistent

“siftent with the trade of England, but will
 “render the trade of this kingdom both use-
 “ful and necessary to England.”

The commons in their address § promise their hearty endeavours to establish a linen and hempen manufacture in Ireland, and say that they hoped to find such a temperament in respect to the woollen trade here, that the same may not be injurious to England. They referred the consideration of that subject to the committee of supply, who resolved that an additional duty be laid on old and new drapery of the manufacture of this kingdom † that shall be exported, frizes excepted; to which the house agreed *. But there were petitions presented against this duty, and relative to the quantity of it, and the committee appointed to consider of this duty were not it seems so expeditious in their proceedings as the impatience of the times required ‡.

On

§ Com. Jour. 2 Vol. p. 997. † Ib. 2 vol. p. 1022.

* October 24, 1698.

‡ Com. Jour. v. 2, p. 1007, 1035.

On the 2d of October the lords justices made a quickening speech to both houses, taking notice, that the progress which they expected was not made, in the business of the session, and use those remarkable words, "The matters we recommended to you are so necessary, and the prosperity of this kingdom depends so much on the good success of this session, that since we know his majesty's affairs cannot permit your sitting very long, we thought the greatest mark we could give of our kindness and concern for you, was to come hither, and desire you to hasten the dispatch of the matters under your consideration; in which we are the more earnest, because we must be sensible, that if the present opportunity his majesty's affection to you hath put into your hands be lost, it seems hardly to be recovered †."

On the 2d of January 1698, O. S. the house resolved, that the report from the committee of the whole house, appointed to consider

† Com. Jour. p. 1032.

consider of a duty to be laid on the woollen manufactures of this kingdom, should be made on the next day, and nothing to intervene. But on that day a message was delivered from the lords justices in the following words, " We have received his majestys commands† to send unto you a bill, " entitled an act for laying an additional " duty upon woollen manufactures exported " out of this kingdom; the passing of which " in this session his majesty recommends to " you, as what may be of great advantage " for the preservation of the trade of this " kingdom."

The bill which accompanied this message was presented, and a question for receiving it was carried in the affirmative, by 74 against 34. This bill must have been transmitted from the council of Ireland. Whilst the commons were proceeding with the utmost temper and moderation, were exerting great firmness in restraining all attempts to enflame the

† Com. Jour. 2 Vol. p. 1082.

the minds of the people†, and were deliberating on the most important subject that could arise, it was taken out of their hands‡; but the bill passed though not without opposition*, and received the royal assent on the 29th day of January 1698.

By this act an additional duty was imposed of 4s. for every 20s. in value of broad cloth exported out of Ireland, and 2s. on every 20s. in value of new drapery, frizes only excepted, from the 25th of March 99, to the 25th March, 1702‖; the only woollen manufacture excepted was one of which Ireland had been in possession before the reign of Edward the 3d, and in which she had been always distinguished‡. This law has every appearance of having being framed on the part of administration.

But

Com. Jour. 2 vol. 1007. * Com. Jour. 1104, by 105, against 41. ‖ 10 W. 3 ch. 5.

† And. on Com. Vol. 1. 204.

§ The commissioners of trade in England by their representation of the 11th October 1698, say, (Eng. Com. Jour. 12 vol. 437-) "they conceive it not necessary to make any alteration whatsoever in this act," but take notice that the duties on broad cloth, of which very little is made in Ireland, is 20 per cent; but the duty on new drapery, of which much is made, is but 10 per cent.

but it did not satisfy the English parliament, where a perpetual law was made, prohibiting, from the 20th of June, 1699*, the exportation from Ireland of all goods made or mixed with wool, except to England and Wales, and with the license of the commissioners of the revenue; duties† had been before laid on the importation into England equal to a prohibition, therefore this act has operated as a total prohibition of the exportation.

Before these laws the Irish were under great disadvantages in the woollen trade, by not being allowed to export their woollen manufactures to the English colonies§, or to import dye stuffs directly from thence; and the English in this respect, and in having those exclusive markets, possessed considerable advantages.

Let it now be considered what are the usual means taken to promote the prosperity

* Eng. Stat. 10 and 11 Wil. III. ch. 10, passed in 1699.

† 12 Ch. II. ch. 4, Eng. and afterwards continued by 11 Geo. I. ch. 7. Brit.

§ By an Eng. act, made in 1663, the same which laid the first restraint on the exportation of cattle.

rity of any country in respect of trade and manufactures. She is encouraged to work up her own materials, to export her manufactures to other nations, to import from them the materials for manufacture, and to export none of her own that she is able to work up, not to buy what she is capable of selling to others, and to promote the carrying trade and ship-building. If these are the most obvious means by which a nation may advance in strength and riches, institutions counteracting those means must necessarily tend to reduce it to weakness and poverty; and therefore the advocates for the continuance of those institutions will find it difficult to satisfy the world that such a system of policy is either reasonable or just.

The cheapness of labour, the excellence of materials, and the success of the manufacture in the excluded country *, may appear to an unprejudiced man to be rather reasons

* See the Address of the English House of Lords.

sions for the encouragement than for the prohibition. But the preamble of the English act of the 10th and 11th of William III. affirms, that the exportation from Ireland and the English plantations in America to foreign markets, heretofore supplied from England, would inevitably sink the value of lands, and tend to the ruin of the trade and manufactures of that realm. I shall only consider this assertion as relative to Ireland. A fact upon which the happiness of a great and ancient kingdom, and of millions of people depends, ought to have been supported by the most incontestible evidence, and should never be suffered to rest in speculation, or to be taken from the mere suggestion or distant apprehension of commercial jealousy. Those fears for the future were not founded on any experience of the past. From what market had the woollen manufactures of Ireland ever excluded England? What part of her trade, and which of her manufactures had been ruined, and where did any of her lands fall by the woollen exports of Ireland? Were any

any of those facts attempted to be proved at the time of the prohibition? The amount of the Irish export proves it to have been impossible that those facts could have then existed. The consequences mentioned as likely to arise to England from the supposed increase of those manufactures in Ireland, had no other foundation but the apprehensions of rivalry among trading people, who, in excluding their fellow-citizens, have opened the gates for the admission of the enemy.

Whether those apprehensions are now well founded, should be carefully considered. Justice, sound policy, and the general good of the British empire require it. The arguments in support of those restraints are principally these:—That labour is cheaper and taxes lower in Ireland than in England, and that the former would be able to under sell the latter in all foreign markets.

Spinning is now certainly cheaper in Ireland, because the persons employed in it
live

live on food* with which the English would not be content; but the wages of spinners would soon rise if the trade was opened. At the loom, I am informed, that the same quantity of work is done cheaper in England than in Ireland; and we have the misfortune of daily experience to convince us that the English, notwithstanding the supposed advantages of the Irish in this trade, undersell them at their own markets in every branch of the woollen manufacture. A decisive proof that they cannot undersell the English in foreign markets.

With the increase of manufactures, agriculture and commerce in Ireland, the demand for labour, and consequently its price, would increase §. That price would be soon higher in Ireland than in England. It is not in the richest countries, but in those that are growing rich the fastest, that the wages of labour are highest †, though the price
of

* Potatoes and milk, or more frequently water.

§ Dr. Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, 1 vol. p. 94.

† *Ib.* 85, 86.

of provisions is much lower in the latter; this, before the present rebellion, was in both respects the case of England and North America. Any difference in the price of labour is more than balanced by the difference in the price of the material, which has been for many years past higher in Ireland than in England, and would become more valuable if the export of the manufacture was allowed. The English have also great advantages in this trade from their habits of diligence, superior skill and large capitals. From these circumstances, though the Scotch have full liberty to export their woollen manufactures, the English work up their wool*, and the Scotch make only some kinds of coarse cloaths for the lower classes of their people; and this is said to be for want of a capital to manufacture it at home §. If the woollen trade was now open to Ireland, it would be for the most part.

* Dr. Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, 1 Vol. p. 445.
 Dr. Campbell's *Polit. Survey of Great Britain*, 2 Vol. p. 159. *Anderfen on Industry*.

§ Smith, *ib*.

part carried on by English capitals, and by merchants resident there. Nearly one half of the stock which carried on the foreign trade of Ireland in 1672, inconsiderable as it then was, belonged to those who lived out of Ireland*. The greater part of the exportation and coasting trade of British America was carried on by the capitals of merchants who resided in Great Britain; even many of the stores and ware-houses from which goods were retailed in some of their principal provinces, particularly in Virginia and Maryland, belonged to merchants who resided in Great Britain, and the retail trade was carried on by those who were not resident in the country†. It is said that in ancient Egypt, China and Indostan, the greater part of their exportation trade was carried on by foreigners§. The same thing happened formerly in Ireland, where the whole commerce of the country was carried on by the Dutch‡; and at present in the
viĉtualling

* Sir Wil. Petty's Polit. Survey of Ireland, p. 90.

† Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1 Vol. p. 446. § Ib.

‡ Lord Strafford's Letters, 1 Vol. p. 33.

victualling trade of Ireland, the Irish are but factors to the English. This is not without example in Great Britain, where there are many little manufacturing towns, the inhabitants of which have not capitals sufficient to transport the produce of their own industry to those distant markets where there is demand and consumption for it, and their merchants are properly only the agents of wealthier merchants, who reside in some of the greater commercial cities †. The Irish are deficient in all kinds of stock, they have not sufficient for the cultivation of their lands, and are deficient in the stocks of master manufacturers, wholesale merchants, and even of retailers.

Of what Ireland gains it is computed that one third centers in Great Britain §. Of our woollen manufacture the greatest part of the profit would go directly there. But the manufacturers of Ireland would be employed,
would

† Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, 1 Vol. p. 445.

§ Sir M. Decker's decline of foreign trade, p. 155, and Anderson on Commerce, 2 Vol. p. 149.

would be enabled to buy from the farmers the superfluous produce of their labour, the people would become industrious, their numbers would greatly increase, the British state would be strengthened, though probably this country would not for many years find any great influx of wealth; it would be however more equally distributed, from which the people and the government would derive many important advantages.

Whatever wealth might be gained by Ireland would be, in every respect, an accession to Great Britain. Not only a considerable part of it would flow to the seat of government, and of final judicature, and to the centre of commerce; but when Ireland should be able she would be found willing, as in justice she ought to be, to bear her part of those expences which Great Britain may hereafter incur, in her efforts for the protection of the whole British empire. If Ireland cheerfully and spontaneously, but when she was ill able, contributed, particularly in the years 1759, 1761 and 1769, and continued
to

to do so in the midst of distress and poverty, without murmur, to the end of the year 1778, when Great Britain thought proper to relieve her from a burden which she was no longer able to bear, no doubt can be entertained of her contributing, in a much greater proportion, when the means of acquiring shall be opened to her.

I form this opinion, not only from the proofs which the experience of many years, and in many signal instances has given, but the nature of the Irish constitution, which requires that the laws of Ireland should be certified under the great seal of England, and the superintending protection of Great Britain, necessary to the existence of Ireland, would make it her interest to cultivate, at all times, a good understanding with her sister kingdom.

The lowness of taxes in Ireland seems to fall within the objection arising from the cheapness of labour. But the disproportion between the taxes of the two kingdoms is much overrated in Great Britain. Hearth-money

in Ireland amounts to about 59,000*l.* yearly, the sums raised by Grand Juries are said to exceed the annual sum of 140,000*l.* and the duties on beef, butter, pork and tallow exported, at a medium from 1772 to 1778, amount to 26,577*l.* 11*s.* yearly. These are payable out of lands, or their immediate produce, and may well be considered as a land tax. These with the many other taxes payable in Ireland, compared either with the annual amount of the sums which the inhabitants can earn or expend, with the rental of the lands, the amount of the circulating specie, of personal property, or of the trade of Ireland, it is apprehended would appear not to be inferior in proportion to the taxes of England, compared with any of those objects in that country†. The sums remitted to absentees*, are worse than so much

† Compare the circumstances of the two countries in one of those articles, which affects all the rest. The sums raised in Great Britain in time of peace are said to amount to ten millions, in Ireland to more than one million yearly. The circulating cash of the former is estimated at 23 millions, of the latter at two.

See post. 59.

much paid in taxes, because a large proportion of these is usually expended in the country. If this reasoning is admitted, it will require no calculation to shew that Ireland pays more taxes in proportion to its small income, than England does in proportion to its great one.

Of excisable commodities, the consumption by each manufacturer is not so considerable as to make the great difference commonly imagined in the price of labour. It is an acknowledged fact that Ireland pays in excises as much as she is able to bear, and that her inability to bear more arises from those very restraints. But supposing the disproportion to be as great as is erroneously imagined in Great Britain, it will not conclude in favour of the prohibition. The land-tax is nearly four times as high in some counties of England as in others, and provisions are much cheaper in some parts of that kingdom than in others, and yet they have all sufficient employment, and go to market upon equal terms. But a

monopoly and not an equal market was plainly the object in 1698 ; it was not to prevent the Irish from underselling at foreign markets, but to prevent their selling there at all. The consequences to the excluded country have been mentioned. England has also been a great sufferer by this mistaken policy.

Mr. Dobbs, who wrote in 1729 *, affirms that by this law of 1699, our woollen manufacturers were forced away into France, Germany and Spain ; that they had in many branches so much improved the woollen manufacture of France, as not only to supply themselves, but to vie with the English in foreign markets, and that by their correspondence, they had laid the foundation for the running of wool thither both from England and Ireland. He says that those nations were then so improved, as in a great measure, to supply themselves with many sorts they formerly had from England, and since that time have deprived
Britain

* Essay on the Trade of Ireland, p. 6, 7.

Britain of millions, instead of the thousands that Ireland might have made.

It is now acknowledged that the French undersell the English; and as far as they are supplied with Irish wool, the loss to the British empire is double what it would be, if the Irish exported their goods manufactured. This is mentioned by Sir Matthew Decker*, as the cause of the decline of the English, and the increase of the French woollen manufactures; and he asserts that the Irish can recover that trade out of their hands. England, since the passing this law, has got much less of our wool than before †. In 1698, the export of our wool to England amounted to 377,520 $\frac{3}{4}$ stone; at a medium of eight years, to lady-day 1728, it was only 227,049 stone, which is 148,000 stone less than in 1698, and was a loss of more than half a million yearly to England. In the last ten years the quantity exported has been so greatly reduced, that in one of these years ‡ it a-

mounted

* Decline of foreign trade, p. 55, 56, 155.

† Dobbs, p. 76.

‡ In 1774.

mounted only to 1007 ft. 11 lb. and in the last year did not exceed 1665 ft. 12 lb. *. The price of wool, under an absolute prohibition, is 50l. or 60l. per cent. under the market price of Europe, which will always defeat the prohibition †.

The impracticability of preventing the pernicious practice of running wool is now well understood. Of the thirty-two counties in Ireland nineteen are maritime, and the rest are washed by a number of fine rivers that empty themselves into the sea. Can such an extent of ocean, such a range of coasts, such a multitude of harbours, bays and creeks be effectually guarded?

The prohibition of the export of live cattle forced the Irish into the re-establishment

* Nor was this deficiency made up by the exportation of yarn. The quantities of these several articles exported from 1764 to 1778, are mentioned in the Appendix, Numb.

† Smith's *Memoirs of Wool*, 2 Vol. p. 554. The only way to prevent it, is to enable us to work it up at home, *Ib.* 295.

ment of their woollen manufacture; and the restraint of the woollen manufacture was a strong temptation to the running of wool. The severest penalties were enacted, the British legislature, the government and house of commons of Ireland, exerted all possible efforts to remove this growing evil, but in vain, until the law was made in Great Britain * in 1739, to take off the duties from woollen or bay yarn exported from Ireland, excepting worsted yarn of two or more threads, which has certainly given a considerable check to the running of wool, and has shewn that the policy of opening is far more efficacious than that of restraining. The world is become a great commercial society, exclude trade from one channel, and it seldom fails to find another,

To shew the absolute necessity of Great Britain's opening to Ireland some new means of acquiring, let the annual balance of exports and

* This was done for the benefit of the woollen manufacture in England. Eng. Com. Jour. 22 Vol. p. 445.

and imports, returned from the entries in the different custom houses, in favour of Ireland, on all her trade with the whole world, in every year from 1768 to 1778, be compared with the remittances made from Ireland to England in each of those years, it will evidently appear that those remittances could not be made out of that balance. The entries of exports made at custom houses are well known to exceed the real amount of those exports in all countries, and this excess is greater in times of diffidence, when merchants wish to acquire credit by giving themselves the appearance of being great traders.

This balance in favour of Ireland on her general trade, appears by those returns to have been in 1776, 606,190l. 11s. 0½d. in 1777, 24,203l. 3s. 10½d. in 1778, 386,384l. 5s. 7d. and taken at a medium of eleven years from 1768 to 1778, both inclusive, it amounts to the sum of 605,083l. 7s. 5d. The sums remitted from Ireland to Great-Britain for rents, interest
of

of money, pensions, salaries and profits of offices amounted, at the lowest computation, from 1768 to 1773, to 1,100,000*l.* yearly *; and from 1773, when the tontines were introduced, from which period large sums were borrowed from England, those remittances were considerably increased, and are now not less than between 12 and 13000*l.* yearly. Ireland then pays to Great-Britain double the sum that she collects from the whole world in all the trade which Great-Britain allows her. It will be difficult to find a similar instance in the history of mankind.

Those great and constant issues of her wealth without any return, not felt by any other country in such a degree, are reasons for granting advantages to Ireland to supply this consuming waste, instead of depriving her of any which Nature has bestowed.

* This is stated considerably under the computation made in the list of absentees published in Dublin in 1769, which makes the amount at that time 1,208,982*l.* 1*4s.* 6*d.*

If any of the resources, which have hitherto enabled her to bear this prodigious drain, are injurious to the manufactures both of England and Ireland, and highly advantageous to the rivals and enemies of both, is it wise in Great-Britain by persevering in an impracticable system of commercial policy, repugnant to the natural course and order of things, to suffer so very considerable a part of the empire to remain in such a situation?

The experiment of an equal and reasonable system of commerce is worth making; that which has been found the best conductor in philosophy is the surest guide in commerce.

Would you consult persons employed in the trade? They have in one respect an interest opposite to that of the public. To narrow the competition is advantageous to the dealers*, but prejudicial to the public. If Edward the first had not preferred the
general

* Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1 Vol. 316.

general welfare of his subjects to the interested opinions and petitions of the traders, all merchant traders (who were then mostly strangers) would have been sent away from London †, for which purpose the commons offered him the 50th part of their moveables*.

What was the information given by the trading towns in 1697 and 1698, on the subject of the woollen manufacture of Ireland, several of their § petitions state that the woollen manufacture was *set up* in Ireland, as if it had been lately introduced there; and one of them goes so far as to represent the particular time and manner of introducing it. “Many of the poor of that kingdom, says this extraordinary petition, during the late rebellion there, fled into the West of England, where they were put to work in the woollen manu-

† Anderson on Com. 1 Vol. 131.

* The wish of traders for a monopoly is not confined to England; in the same kingdom some parts are restrained in favour of others, as in Sweden to this hour. Abbe Refnal 2 Vol. 28.

§ Eng. Com. Journ. 12 Vol. 64, 68.

‡ Eng. Com. Journ. 12 Vol. 64.

“ manufacture to learn that trade, and since
 “ the reduction of Ireland *endeavours* were
 “ *used* to *set up* those manufactures there.”

Would any man suppose that this could relate to a manufacture, in which this kingdom excelled before the time of Edward the 3d, which had been the subject of so many laws in both kingdoms, and which was always cultivated here, and before this rebellion with more success than after it? the trading towns gave accounts totally inconsistent of the state of this manufacture at that time in England: from Exeter it is represented as greatly decayed and discouraged* in those parts; and diminished in England. But a petition from Leeds represents this manufacture as having very much increased† since the revolution in all its several branches, to the general interest of England; and yet, in two days after the clothiers from three towns in Gloucestershire assert, that the trade has decayed, and that the poor are almost starved‡. The commissioners of trade differ in opinion from them, and by
 their

* English Com. Journ. vol. 12, p. 7.

† Ib. 527. ‡ Ib. 530.

their report, it appears that the woollen manufacture was then very much increased and improved †. The traders have sometimes mistaken their own interests on those subjects; in 1698, a petition for prohibiting the importation from Ireland of all worsted and and woollen yarn, represents that the poor of England are ready to perish by this importation*; and in 1739, several petitions were preferred against taking off the duties § from worsted and bay yarn exported from Ireland to England. But this has been done in the manner before-mentioned, and is now acknowledged to be highly useful to England. Trading people have ever aimed at exclusive privileges; of this there are two extraordinary instances; in the year 1698, two petitions were preferred, from Folkestone and Aldborough, stating a singular grievance that they suffered from Ireland, “by the Irish catching herrings at *Waterford* and *Wexford* † and sending them to the Streights, and thereby *forestalling* and ruining petitioners markets;” but these petitioners

† English Com. Jour. Vol. 12, p. 434.

* Ib. 387. § Ib. vol. 22. ‡ Ib. 178.

oners had the *hard lot* of having motions in their favour rejected.

I wish that the fullest information may be had in this important investigation, but between the inconsistent accounts and opinions that will probably be given, experience only can decide ; and experience will demonstrate that the removal of those restraints will promote the prosperity of both kingdoms.

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

T H E

T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
S I X T H ' L E T T E R.

T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
S I X T H L E T T E R.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 1st September 1779.

BY the proceedings in the English parliament in the year 1698, and the speech of the lords justices to the Irish parliament in that year it appears, that the linen was intended to be given to this country as an equivalent for the woollen manufacture. The opinion that this supposed equivalent was accepted of as such by Ireland is mistaken. The tempera-
ment, which the commons of Ireland in their address said they hoped to find, was no more than a partial and a temporary duty on the
K exportation,

exportation, as an experiment only, and not as an established system, reserving the exportation of frize, then much the most valuable part to Ireland ‡. The English intended the linen manufacture as a compensation, and declared they thought it would be much more advantageous to Ireland * than the woollen trade.

This idea of an equivalent has led several persons, and among the rest two very able writers †, into mistakes, from the want of information in some facts which are necessary to be known, that this transaction may be fully understood, and therefore ought to be particularly stated.

The

‡ The lords commissioners of trade in England, by their report of the 31st August 1697, (Eng. Com. Jour. 12 vol. p. 428.) relating to the trade between England and Ireland, though they recommend the restraining of the exportation of all sorts of woollen manufactures out of Ireland, make the following exception, “except only, that of their “frize, as is wont, to England.”

* See before Speech of lords Justices.

† Mr. Dobbs, and after him Dr. Smith.

The Irish had before this period applied themselves to the linen trade. This appears by two of their statutes, in the reign of Elizabeth, one laying a duty on the export of flax and linen yarn †, and the other, making it felony to ship them without paying such duty §. In the reign of Charles the 1st, great pains were taken by lord Strafford to encourage this manufacture; and in the succeeding reign † the great and munificent efforts of the first duke of Ormond were crowned with merited success. The blasts of civil dissensions nipped these opening buds of industry, and when the season was more favourable, it is probable that, like England, they found the woollen manufacture a more useful object of national pursuit; which may be collected from the address of the English house of commons, “that they so unwillingly promote the linen trade*,” and it was natural for a poor and

K 2 exhausted

† 11 Elizabeth, session 3, ch. 10. § 13 Elizabeth, session 5, ch. 4. † 17 and 18 Ch. 2, ch. 9, for the advancement of the linen manufacture. Carte.

* See before.

exhausted country to work up the materials of which it was possessed.

In 1696 the English had given encouragement to the manufactures of hemp and flax in Ireland, but without stipulating any restraint of the export of woollen goods. The English act made in that year recites that great sums of money were yearly exported out of England, for the purchasing of hemp, flax and linen, and the productions thereof, which might be prevented by being supplied from Ireland, and allows natives of England and Ireland to import into England free of all duties§, hemp and flax, and all the productions thereof. In the same session† a law passed in England for the more effectually preventing the exportation of wool, and for encouraging the importation thereof from Ireland. Both those manufactures were under the consideration of parliament this session, and it was thought, from enlarged views of the welfare of both kingdoms, that England should

§ 7 and 8 W. 3, ch. 39 from the 1st of August 1696.
 † 7 and 8 W. ch. 28.

should encourage the linen, without discouraging the woollen manufacture of Ireland. There was no further encouragement given by England to our linen manufacture for some years after the year 1696*. *In 1699, there was no equivalent whatever given for the prohibition of the export of our woollen manufactures.*

It is true, the assurances given by both houses of parliament in England, for the encouragement of our linen trade, were as strong as words could express; but was this intended encouragement, if immediately carried into execution, an equivalent to Ireland for what she had lost? let it first be considered whether it was an equivalent at the time of the prohibition.

The woollen was then the principal manufacture and trade of Ireland. That it was then considered as her staple, appears from the several acts of parliament before-mentioned

* Not till the year 1705.

mentioned, and from the attempt made in 1695, by the Irish house of commons, to lay a duty on all old and new drapery imported. The amount of the export proves[§] the value of the trade to so poor a country as Ireland, and makes it probable that she then clothed her own people. The address of the English house of lords shews that this manufacture was “growing” amongst us, and the goodness of our materials “for making *all manner* of cloth[†].” And the English act of 1698 is a voucher that this manufacture was then in so flourishing a state as to give apprehensions, however ill-founded, of its rivalling England in foreign markets. The immediate consequences to Ireland shewed the value of what she lost; many thousand manufacturers were obliged to leave this kingdom for want of employment; many parts of the southern and western counties were so far depopulated that they have not yet recovered a reasonable number of inhabitants; and the whole kingdom was reduced

§ Com. Jour. 2 Vol. 725, 733. 16. vol. 360.

† See before.

duced to the greatest poverty and distress *. The linen trade of Ireland was then of little consideration, compared with the woollen †. The whole exportation of linens in 1700 ‡ amounted only in value to 14,112l. It was an experiment substituted in the place of an established trade.

The English ports in Asia, Africa and America were then shut against our linens, and when they were opened § for our white and brown linens, the restraints of imports from thence to Ireland made that concession of less value, and she still found it her interest to send for the most part her linens to England. The linen could not have been a compensation for the woollen manufacture which employs by far a greater number of hands, and yields much greater profit to the public, as well as to the manufacturers ||. Of this manufacture there are not many countries which have the primum in equal perfection

* Dobbs 6, 7. Com. Journ. 16 Vol. 362.

† Ib. 363.

§ By 3d and 4th Anne, ch. 9.

|| And. on Comm. 2 Vol. 225.

perfection with England and Ireland, and no countries, taking in the various kinds of those extensive manufactures, so fit for carrying them on. There cannot be many rivals in this trade; in the linen they are most numerous. Other parts of the world are more fit for it than Ireland, and many equally so.

If this could be supposed to have been an equivalent at the time, or to have become so by its success, it can no longer be considered in that light. The commercial state of Europe is greatly altered. Ireland can no longer enjoy the benefit intended for her. It was intended that the great sums of money remitted out of England to foreign countries in this branch of commerce should all center in Ireland, and that England should be supplied with linen from thence*; but foreigners now draw great sums from England in this trade, and rival the

* This appears by the preamble to the English act of the 7th and 8th W. III. c. 39.

the Irish in the English markets. The Russians are become powerful rivals to the Irish and undersel them in the coarse kinds of linen. This is now the staple manufacture of Scotland. England that had formerly cultivated this manufacture without success, and had taken linens * from France to the amount of 700,000*l.* yearly, has now made great progress in it. The encouragement of this trade in England and Scotland has been long a principal object to the British legislature, and the nation that encouraged us to the undertaking is now become our rival[†] in it[‡]; that this is not too strong an expression will appear by considering two British statutes, one of which [‡] has laid a duty on the importation of Irish sail-cloth into Great-Britain, as long as the bounties should be paid on the exportation from § Ireland, which obliged us to
discontinue

* Anderson on Commerce, 2 Vol. 177.

† Com. Journ. 16 Vol. 365.

‡ In 1750.

§ By the law of 1750, and the bounties given on the
exportation

discontinue them; and the other* has given a bounty on the exportation of *British* checquered and striped linens exported out of *Great-Britain* to Africa, America, Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, the island of Minorca, or the East-Indies. This is now become a very valuable part of the manufacture, which *Great-Britain* by the operation of this bounty keeps to herself. The bounties on the exportation of all other linen, which she has generously given to ours as well as to her own † operate much more strongly in favour of the latter‡; the expence of freight, insurance, commission, &c. in sending

exportation of sail-cloth from *Great-Britain* to foreign countries, Ireland has almost lost this trade; she cannot now supply herself. *Great-Britain* has not been the gainer; the quantities of sail-cloth imported there in 1774, exceeding, according to the return from the custom-house in London, the quantities imported in the year 1750, when the restrictive law was made. It has been taken from Ireland, and given to the Russians, Germans, and Dutch. *Ir. Com. Journ.* 16 Vol. 363.

* 10 G. III. ch. continued by act of last session to the year 1786.

† In the year 1743.

‡ *Com. Journ.* 16 Vol. 369, 389.

sending the linens from Ireland to England has been computed at four per cent. and, if this computation is right, when the British linens obtain 12l. per cent. the full amount of the premium, the Irish do not receive above eight. Those bounties, though acknowledged to be a favour to Ireland, give Great-Britain a further, and a very important advantage in this trade, by inducing us to send all our linens to England, from whence other countries are supplied.

The great hinge upon which the stipulation on the part of England in the year 1698 turned, was that England should give every possible encouragement to the linen and hempen manufactures in Ireland. Encouraging these manufactures in another country was not compatible with this intention. The course of events made it necessary to do this in Scotland*; the course of trade

* *To please the English* Scotland has for half a century past exerted herself, as much as possible, to improve the linen manufacture. Anderson on Industry, 2 Vol. 233.

trade made it necessary for England to do the same; a commercial country must cultivate every considerable manufacture of which she has or can get the primum. These circumstances have totally changed the state of the question; and if it was reasonable and just that Ireland¹ in 1698 should have accepted of the linen in the place of the woollen manufactures, it deserves to be considered, whether by the almost total change of the circumstances it is not now unreasonable and unjust.

America itself, the opening of whose markets[‡] to Irish linens was thought to have been one of the principal encouragements to that trade, is now become a rival and an enemy, and when she puts off the latter character will appear in the former with new force and infinite advantages.

The emigrations for many years of such great multitudes of our linen manufacturers
to

[‡] Com. Journ. 16 vol. p. 370.

to America* proves incontrovertibly that they can carry on their trade with more success in America than in Ireland. But let us examine the facts to determine whether the proposed encouragements have taken place. The declaration of the lords of England for the encouragement of the linen manufacture of Ireland was, "to all the advantage and profit that kingdom can be capable of," and of the commons, "that they shall be *always* ready to give it their *utmost* assistance." The speech of the lords justices shews the extent of this engagement, and promises the encouragement of England, "to the linen and hempen manufactures of Ireland."

In the year 1705† liberty was given to the natives of England or Ireland, to export from Ireland to the English plantations white and brown linens only, but no liberty given

* The province of Ulster in two years is said to have lost 30.000 of its inhabitants. Com. Journ. 16 v. 381.

† From 24th June 1705. 3 and 4 Ann ch. 8. for 11 years; but afterwards continued.

given to bring in return any goods from thence to Ireland, which will appear, from the account in the appendix, to have made this law of inconsiderable effect. In 1743 premiums were given on the exportation of English and Irish linens from Great Britain, and the bounty granted by Great Britain in 1774, on flax-seed imported into Ireland, is a further proof of the munificent attention of Great Britain to our linen trade. But checquered, striped, printed, painted, stained or dyed linens were not until lately admitted into the plantations from Ireland; and the statutes of queen Anne*, laying duties at the rate of 30 per cent on such linens made in *foreign* parts and imported into Great Britain, have been, rather by a forced construction, extended to Ireland, which is deprived of the British markets† for those goods, and, until the year 1777‡, was excluded from the American markets also.

* Brit. acts, 10 Anne, ch. 19. 11 and 12 Anne, ch. 9.

6 G. 1, ch. 4.

† Brit. act, 18 G. 3, ch. 53.

‡ Ir. Com. Journ. 16 vol. 363, 364.

also. But it is thought as to checkered and striped linens, which are a valuable branch of the linen trade, that this act will have little effect in favour of this country, from the operation of the before-mentioned British act of the 10th G. 3, which, by granting a bounty on the exportation of those goods of the manufacture of Great Britain only, gives a direct preference to the British linen manufacture before the Irish.

The hempen manufacture of Ireland has been so far *discouraged* by Great Britain, that the Irish have totally abandoned the culture of hemp*.

I hope to be excused for weighing scrupulously a proposed equivalent, for which the receiver was obliged to part with the advantages of which he was possessed. The equivalent, given in 1667 for the almost entire exclusion of Ireland from the ports of England and America, was the exportation
of

* Ir. Com. Journ. 16 vol. 363.

of our manufactures to foreign nations. The prohibition of 1699 was not altogether consistent with the equivalent of 1667; and from the equivalent of 1698 the superior encouragement since given to English and Scotch linen, and the discouragement to the checquer and stamped linen and fail cloth of Ireland must make a large deduction. But why must one manufacture only be encouraged? the linen and the woollen trades of Ireland were formerly both encouraged by the legislatures of both kingdoms; they are now both equally encouraged in England.

If this single trade was found sufficient employment for 1,000,000 men who remained in this country at the time of this restraint (the contrary of which has been shewn), it would require the interposition of more than human wisdom to divide it among 2,500,000 men at this day, and to send the multitude away satisfied.

No populous commercial country can subsist on one manufacture; if the world
has

has ever produced such an instance, I have not been able to find it. Reason and experience demonstrate that, to make a society happy, the members of it must be able to supply the wants of each other, as far as their country affords the means, and where it does not, by exchanging the produce of their industry for that of their neighbours. Where the former is discouraged or the latter prevented, that community cannot be happy. If they are not allowed to send to other countries the manufactured produce of their own, the people who enjoy that liberty will undersell them in their own markets; the restrained manufacturers will be reduced to poverty, and will hang like paralytic limbs on the rest of the body.

If England's commercial system would have been incomplete, had she failed to cultivate any one principal manufacture of which she had or could obtain the material, what shall we say to the commercial state of that country, restrained in a manufacture of which she has the materials in abundance.

bundance, and in which she had made great progress, and almost confined to one manufacture of which she has not the *primum*.

Manufactures, though they may flourish for a time, generally fail in countries that do not produce the principal materials of them. Of this there are many instances. Venice and the other Italian states carried on the woollen manufacture, until the countries which produced the materials manufactured them, when the Italian manufactures declined, and dwindled into little consideration in comparison of their former splendor. The Flemings, from their vicinity to those countries that produced the materials, beat the Italians out of their markets. But when England cultivated that manufacture, the Flemings lost it. That this and not oppression was the cause appears from the flourishing state of the linen manufacture* there, because it consumes flax the native

* Anderson on Industry, 1 vol. 34 to 40.

native produce of the soil; and it is much to be feared that those islands will be obliged to yield the superiority in this trade to other nations that have great extent of country, and sufficient land to spare for this impoverishing production.

That some parts of Ireland may produce good flax must be allowed, and also that parts of Flanders would produce fine wool. But though the legislature has for many years made it a capital object to encourage the growth of flax and the raising of flax-feed in this kingdom, yet it is obliged to pay above 9000*l.* yearly in premiums on the importation of flax-feed, which is now almost all imported, and costs us between 70 and 80,000*l.* yearly. Flax-farming, in any large quantity, is become a precarious and losing trade†, and those who have been induced to attempt it by premiums from the linen-board have, after receiving those pre-

L 2

miums,

miums, generally found themselves losers, and have declined that branch of tillage.

When the imported flax-seed is unfound and fails in particular districts, which very frequently happens, the distress, confusion and litigation that arise among manufacturers, farmers, retailers and merchants, affords a melancholy proof of the dangerous consequences to a populous nation, when the industry of the people, and the hope of the rising year rest on a single manufacture, for the materials of which we must depend upon the courtesy and good faith of other nations.

Let me appeal to the experience of very near a century, in the very instance now before you. A single manufacture is highly encouraged; it obtains large premiums not only from the legislature of its own country, but from that of a great neighbouring kingdom; it becomes not only the first, but almost the sole national object; immense sums of money are expended in the cultivation

tion of it §, and the success exceeds our most sanguine expectations. But look into the state of this country; you will find property circulating slowly and languidly, and in the most numerous classes of your people, no circulation or property at all. You will frequently find them in want of employment and of food, and reduced in a vast number of instances from the slightest causes to distress and beggary. All other manufacturers will continue spiritless, poor and distressed, and derive from uncertain employment a precarious and miserable subsistence; they gain little by the success of the prosperous trade; the dealers in which are tempted to buy from that country to which they principally sell; the disease of those morbid parts must spread through the whole body, and will at length reach the persons employed in the favoured manufacture. These will become poor and wretched and discontented; they emigrate by thousands; in vain you represent the crime of deserting

§ See Com. Jour. 17 vol. 263 to 287 for the sums paid from 1700 to 1775. They amount to 803,436l. os 2½d.

deserting their country, the folly of forsaking their friends, the temerity of wandering to distant and perhaps inhospitable climates; their despondency is deaf to the suggestions of prudence, and will answer, that they can no longer stay "where hope never comes," but will fly from these "regions of sorrow*."

Let me not be thought to undervalue the bounties and generosity of that great nation which has taken our linen trade under its protection. There is much ill-breeding, though perhaps some good sense, in the churlish reply of the philosopher to the request of the prince who visited his humble dwelling, and desired to know, and to gratify his wishes; they were no more than this, that the prince should not stand between the philosopher and the sun. Had he been a man of the world he might have expressed the same idea with more address, though with less force and significance; he

* This malady of emigration among our linen manufacturers has appeared at many different periods during this century.

he might have said, "I am sensible of your
" greatness and of your power; I have no
" doubts of your liberality; but Nature has
" abundantly given me all that I wish; in-
" tercept not one of her greatest gifts;
" allow me to enjoy the bounties of her
" hand, and the contentment of my own
" mind will furnish the rest."

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

THE

T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
S E V E N T H L E T T E R.



T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
S E V E N T H L E T T E R.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 3d Sept. 1779.

BY comparing the restrictive law of 1699, with the statutes which had been previously enacted in England from the 15th year of the reign of Charles the second, relative to the Colonies, it appears that this restrictive law originated in a system of colonization. The principle of that system was that the Colonies should send their materials to England and take from thence her manufactures, and that the making those manufactures in the Colonies should be prohibited

hibited or discouraged. But was it reasonable to extend this principle to Ireland? the climate, growth and productions of the Colonies were different from those of their parent country. England had no sugar canes, coffee, dying stuff, and little tobacco. She took all those from her Colonies only, and it was thought reasonable that they should take from her only the manufactures which she made. But in Ireland, the climate, soil, growth and productions are the same as in England, who could give no such equivalent to Ireland as she gave to America, and was so far from considering her, when this system first prevailed, as a proper subject for such regulations, that she was allowed the benefits arising from those Colonies equally with England, until the 15th year of the reign of king Charles * the second. By an act passed in that year Ireland had no longer the privilege of sending any of her exports, except servants, horses, victuals and salt, to any of the Colonies ;

* 15 Ch. II. ch. 7.

nies ; the reasons are assigned in the preamble, “ to make this kingdom a staple, not
 “ only of the commodities of those planta-
 “ tions, but also of the commodities of other
 “ countries and places for the supplying of
 “ them, and it being the usage of other na-
 “ tions to keep their plantation trade to
 “ themselves *.” At the time of passing this
 law, though less liberal ideas in respect of Ire-
 land were then entertained, it went no fur-
 ther than not to extend to her the bene-
 fit of those Colony regulations ; but it was
 not then thought that this kingdom was a
 proper subject for any such regulations.
 The scheme of substituting there, instead of
 the woollen, the linen trade, was not at that
 time thought of. The English were desir-
 ous to establish it among themselves, and
 by an act of parliament† made in that year
 for encouraging the manufacture of linen,
 granted to all foreigners who shall set it up
 in

* As other nations did the same, Ireland was shut out from the new world, and a considerable part of the old in Asia and Africa.

† 15 Ch. II. ch. 15.

in England, the privileges of natural born subjects.

But it appears by the English statute of the 7th and 8th Will. III. which has been before stated, that this scheme had not succeeded in England, and from this act it is manifest that England considered itself as well as Ireland interested to encourage the linen-manufacture there; and it does not then appear to have been thought just, that Ireland should purchase this benefit for both, by giving up the exportation of any other manufacture. But in 1698 a different principle prevailed; in effect the same, so far as relates to the woollen manufacture, with that which had prevailed as to the commerce of the Colonies. This is evident from the preamble of the English law † made in 1699, “for as much as wool and woollen manufactures of cloth, serge, bays, kerseys and other stuffs, made or mixed with wool,
“ are

* Ch. 39.

† 10th and 11th W. III. ch. 10.

“ are the greatest, and most profitable com-
 “ modities of this kingdom, on which the
 “ value of lands and the trade of the nation
 “ do chiefly depend, and whereas great quan-
 “ tities of like manufactures have of late
 “ been made and are daily encreasing in the
 “ kingdom of Ireland, and *in the English*
 “ *plantations* in America, and are exported
 “ from thence to foreign markets, hereto-
 “ fore supplied from England, which will
 “ inevitably sink the value of lands, and
 “ tend to the ruin of the trade and woollen
 “ manufactures of this realm; for the pre-
 “ vention whereof and for the encourage-
 “ ment of the woollen manufactures in this
 “ kingdom, &c.”

The ruinous consequences of the woollen
 manufactures of Ireland to the value of
 lands, trade and manufactures of England,
 stated in this act, are apprehensions that
 were entertained, and not events that had
 happened; and before those facts are taken
 for granted, I request the mischiefs recited
 in

in the acts* made in England to prevent the importation of cattle dead or alive from Ireland, may be considered. The mischiefs stated in those several laws are supposed to be as ruinous to England as those recited in the act of 1699, and yet are now allowed to be groundless apprehensions, occasioned by short and mistaken views of the real interest of England. Sir W. Petty† demonstrates that the opinion entertained in England at the time of his prohibition of the import of cattle from Ireland was ill-founded; he calls it a strange conceit. If he was now living, he would probably consider the prohibition of our woollen exports as not having a much better foundation.

Connecting

* 15 Ch. II. ch. 7. 18 Ch. II. ch. 2. 20 Ch. II. ch. 7. 22d and 23d Ch. II. ch. 2. 32 Ch. II. ch. 2.

† Petty's Political Survey of Ireland, 70; and ib. Report from the Council of Trade, 117, 118.

Sir W. Temple, 3 Vol. p. 22, 23, that England was evidently a loser by the prohibition of Cattle.

Dr. Smith's Memoirs of Wool, 2 Vol. 337. that the English had since sufficiently felt the mischiefs of this proceeding.

Connecting this preamble of the act of 1699, with the speech made from the throne to the parliament of Ireland in the year 1698, with the addresses of both houses in England, and with the prohibition, by this and by other acts formerly made in England, of exporting wool from Ireland except to that kingdom, the object of this new commercial regulation is obvious. It was to discourage the woollen manufacture in Ireland, and in effect, to prohibit the exportation from thence, because it was the principal branch of manufacture and trade in England, to induce us to send to them our materials for that manufacture, and that we should be supplied with it by them, and to encourage, as a compensation to Ireland, the linen manufacture, which was not at that time a commercial object of any importance to England. This I take to be a part of the system of colony regulations. Whether it was reasonable or just to bring this kingdom into that system, has been already submitted from arguments drawn from the climates and productions of the different

M countries.

countries. The supposed compensation was no more than what Ireland had before ; no further encouragement was given by England to our linen manufacture until six years after this prohibition, when at the request of the Irish house of commons, and after a representation of the ruinous state of this country, liberty was given by an English act of parliament * to export our white and brown linens into the colonies, which was allowing us to do as to one manufacture what, before the 15th of king Charles the second, was permitted in every instance.

It would be presumption in a private man to decide on the weight of those arguments ; but to select and arrange facts that lie dispersed in journals and books of statutes in both kingdoms, and to make observations on those facts with caution and respect, can never give offence to those who inquire for the purpose of relieving a distressed

* 3 and 4 Ann. ch. 8.

LET. 7. OF IRELAND CONSIDERED. 163
treffed nation, and of promoting the general welfare.

In that confidence I beg leave to place this subject in a different view, and to request that it may be considered what the commercial system of this kingdom was at the time of passing this law of 1699? and whether it was, in this respect, reasonable or just that such a regulation should have been then made? The great object which the lords and commons of Great Britain have determined to investigate lead to such a discussion; determined as they are to pursue effectual methods “for promoting “the common strength, wealth and commerce of both kingdoms,” what better guides can they follow than the examples of their ancestors, and the means used by them for many centuries, and in the happiest times, for attaining the same great purposes.

In my opinion it would be improper, in the present state of the British empire, to

agitate disputed questions that may enflame the passions of men. May no such questions ever arise between two affectionate sister kingdoms! It is my purpose only to state acknowledged facts, which never have been contested, and from those facts to lay before you the commercial system of Ireland before the year 1699.

For several centuries before this period Ireland was in possession of the English common law *, and of magna charta. The former secures the subject in the enjoyment of property of every kind; and by the latter *the liberties of all the ports of the kingdom are established.*

The statutes made in England for the common and public weal, are † by an Irish act of the 10th of Henry the 7th, made
laws

* 4 Inst. 349. Matth. Paris, anno 1172. p. 121, 220. Vit. H. 2. Pryn. against the 4th Inst. c. 76, p. 250, 252. Sir John Davis's Hist. 71. Lord Lyttleton's Hist. of H. 2. 3 Vol. 89, 90. 7 Co. 22. 23. 4th Black. 429.

Cooke's 4th Inst. 351.

laws in Ireland; and the English commercial statutes, in which Ireland is expressly mentioned, will place the former state of commerce in this country in a light very different from that in which it has been generally considered in Great-Britain.

By the 17th of Edward the 3d, ch. 1. all sorts of merchandizes may be exported from Ireland, except to the king's enemies.

By the 27th of Edward the 3d, ch. 18. merchants of Ireland and Wales may bring their merchandize to the staple of England; and by the 34th of the same king, ch. 17. all kinds of merchandizes may be exported from and imported into Ireland, as well by aliens as denizens. In the same year there is another statute, ch. 18. that all persons who have lands or possessions in Ireland, might freely import thither, and export from that kingdom *their own commodities*; and by the 50th of Edward the 3d, ch. 3. no alnage is to be paid, if frize ware, which are made in Ireland.

This

This freedom of commerce was beneficial to both countries. It enabled Ireland to be very serviceable to Edward the 3d, as it had been to his father and grandfather, in supplying numbers of armed vessels for transporting their great lords and their attendants and troops * to Scotland, and also to Portsmouth for his French wars.

But the reign of Edward the 4th furnishes still stronger instances of the regard shewn by England to the trade and manufactures of this country.

In the third year of that monarch's reign the artificers of England complained to parliament that they were greatly impoverished and *could not live* by bringing in divers commodities and wares ready wrought †. An act passed reciting those complaints and ordaining that no merchant born a subject of the king, denizen or stranger, or other person should bring into England or Wales
any

* Anderson on Commerce, 1 Vol. 174.

† 3d Edw. 4. ch. 4.

any woollen cloths, &c. and enumerates many other manufactures, on pain of forfeiture; provided that all wares and “chaf-fers” made and wrought in Ireland or Wales, may be brought in and sold in the realm of England, as they were wont before the making of that act*.

In the next year another act† passed in that kingdom, that all woollen cloth brought into England and set to sale, should be forfeited, except cloths made in Wales or Ireland.

In those reigns England was as careful of the commerce and manufactures of her ancient sister kingdom, particularly in her great staple trade, as she was of her own.

Of this attention there were further instances in the years 1468 and 1478. In two treaties

* The part of this law which mentions that it shall be determinable at the king's pleasure, has the prohibition for its object, and does not lessen the force of the argument in favour of Ireland.

† 4th Edw. IV. ch. 1.

treaties concluded in those years between England and the duke of Bretagne, the merchandize to be traded in between England, Ireland and Calais on the one part, and Bretagne on the other, is specified, and woollen cloths are particularly mentioned*.

And in a treaty between Henry the 7th and the Netherlands, Ireland is included, both as to exports and imports†.

The commercial acts of parliament in which Ireland is mentioned have only been stated, because they are not generally known. But the laws made in England before the 10th of Henry the 7th, for the protection of merchants and the security of trade, being laws for the common and public weal, are also made laws here by the Irish statute of that year, which was returned under the great seal of England, and must have been previously considered in the privy council of that kingdom. At this period then the
English

* Anderson on Commerce, 1 Vol. 285.

† Ib. 319.

English commercial system and the Irish, so far as it depended upon the English statute law, was the same; and before this period, so far as it depended upon the common law and Magna Charta, was also the same.

From that time until the 15th of king Charles the 2d, which takes in a period of 167 years, the commercial constitution of Ireland was as much favoured and protected as that of England; “the free enlargement
“of common traffick which his majesty’s
“subjects of Ireland enjoyed,” is taken notice of, incidentally, in an English statute, in the reign of king James the 1st*; and in 1627 king Charles the 1st made a strong declaration in favour of the trade and manufactures of this country. By several English statutes in the reign of king Charles the 2d, an equal attention was shewn to the woollen manufactures in both kingdoms; in the 12th year of his reign† the exportation of wool, wool-felts, fuller’s earth, or any kind
of

* 3d James, ch. 6.

† 12th Ch. 2, ch. 32.

of scowering-earth, was prohibited from both. But let the reasons, mentioned in the preamble, for passing this law be adverted to, —“ for preventing inconveniencies
 “ and losses that happened, and that daily
 “ do and may happen to the kingdom of
 “ England, dominion of Wales, and kingdom of Ireland, through the secret exportation of wool out of and from the said
 “ kingdoms and dominions; and for the *better*
 “ *setting on work the poor people* and inhabitants of the kingdoms and dominions
 “ aforefaid, and to the intent that the full
 “ use and benefit of *the principal native commodities* of the same kingdom and dominion may come, redound and be unto the
 “ subjects and inhabitants of the same:”

This was the voice of nature, and the dictate of sound and general policy; it proclaimed to the nations that they should not give to strangers the bread of their own children, that the produce of the soil should support the inhabitants of the country, that their industry should be exercised on their
 own

own materials, and that the poor should be employed, clothed and fed.

The shipping and navigation of England and Ireland were at this time equally favoured and protected. By another act of the same year no goods or commodities[†] of the growth, production or manufacture of Asia, Africa or America, shall be imported into England, *Ireland* or Wales, but in ships which belong to the people of England or *Ireland*, the dominion of Wales, or the town of Berwick upon Tweed, or which are of the built of the said lands, and of which the master and three-fourths of the mariners are English; and a subsequent statute* makes the encouragement to navigation in both countries equal, by ordaining that the subjects of Ireland and of the Plantations shall be accounted English within the meaning of that clause. Another law[‡] of the same reign shews that the navigation

† 12 Ch. 2, ch. 18.

* 13th and 14th Ch. 2, ch. 11.

‡ 13th and 14th Ch. 2, ch. 18.

vigation, commerce and woollen manufactures of both kingdoms were equally protected by the English legislature. This act lays on the same restraint as the above-mentioned act of the 12th of Charles 2d. and makes the transgression still more penal. It recites that wool, wool-felts, &c. are secretly exported from England and Ireland to foreign parts to the great decay of the woollen manufactures and the destruction of the navigation and commerce of *these kingdoms*.

From those laws it appears that the commerce, navigation and manufactures of this country were not only favoured and protected by the English legislature, but that we had in those times the full benefit of their Plantation trade ; whilst the woollen manufactures were protected and encouraged in England and Ireland, the planting of tobacco in both was prohibited, because “ it
 “ was one of the main products of several
 “ of the plantations, and upon which their
 welfare

“welfare and subsistence do depend †. This policy was liberal, just and equal, it opened the resources and cultivated the strength of every part of the empire.

This commercial system of Ireland was enforced by several acts of her own legislature; two statutes passed in the reign of Henry the 8th to prevent the exportation of wool, because, says the first of those laws, “it hath been the cause of dearth of
“cloth and idleness of many folks*,” and
“tends to the desolation and ruin of this
“poor land.” The second of those laws enforces the prohibition§ by additional penalties; it recites, “that the said beneficial
“law had taken little effect, but that since
“the making thereof great plenty of wool
“had been conveyed out of this land to the
“great and inestimable hurt, decay and im-
“poverishment of the king’s poor subjects
“within the said land, for redress whereof
“and in consideration that conveying of the
“wool

† 12 Ch. 2, ch. 27.

* Ir. 2^d, 13 H. 8, ch. 2. § 28 H. 8, ch. 17.

“ wool of the growth of this land out of
 “ the same is one of the greatest occasions
 “ of the idleness of the people, waste, ruin
 “ and desolation of the king’s cities and bo-
 “ rough towns, and other places of his do-
 “ minion within this land.” The 11th of
 Elizabeth* lays duties on the exportation
 equal to a prohibition; and the reason given
 in the preamble ought to be mentioned;
 “ that the said commodities may be more
 “ abundantly wrought in this realm ere they
 “ shall be so transported, than presently they
 “ are, which shall set many now living idle
 “ on work, to the great relief and commodity
 “ of this realm†.

By the preamble of one of those acts§, made in the reign of Charles the Second, it appears that the sale of Irish woollen goods in

* Ch. 10.

† The necessity of encouraging the people of Ireland to manufacture their own wool, appears by divers statutes to have been the sense of the legislature of both kingdoms for some centuries.

§ Ir. Act of 17 and 18 Ch. 2, ch. 15.

in foreign markets was encouraged by England ; “ whereas there is a general complaint
“ in *England*, France, and other parts be-
“ yond the seas, (whither the woollen cloths
“ and other commodities made of wool in
“ this his majesty’s kingdom of Ireland are
“ transported) of the false, deceitful, uneven,
“ and uncertain making thereof, which com-
“ eth to pass by reason that the clothiers
“ and makers thereof do not observe any
“ certain affize for length, breath and
“ weight for making their clothes and other
“ commodities aforefaid in this kingdom, as
“ they do in the realm of England, and as
“ they ought also to do here ; by which
“ means the merchants, buyers and users of
“ the said cloth and other commodities are
“ much abused and deceived, and the credit,
“ esteem and sale of the said cloth and com-
“ modities is thereby much impaired and un-
“ dervalued, to the great and general hurt
“ and hindrance of the trade of clothing in
“ this whole realm.”

After

After the ports of England were shut against our cattle, and our trade to the English colonies was restrained, still this commercial system was adhered to by encouraging the manufactures of this country, and the exportation of them to foreign countries. In 1667, when the power of the crown was not so well understood as at present, the proclamation before mentioned was published by the lord lieutenant and privy council of Ireland*, in pursuance of a letter from Charles the Second, by the advice of his council in England, notifying to all his subjects of this kingdom, the allowance of a free trade to all foreign countries, either at war or peace with his majesty.

In the year 1663 the distinctions between the trade of England and Ireland†, and the restraints on that of the latter commenced. By an English act passed in that year, intitled an act “ for the encouragement of
“ trade,”

* Carte, 2 Vol. p. 344.

† 15 Ch. 2, ch. 7.

“trade,” a title not very applicable to the parts of it that related to Ireland, besides laying a duty nearly equal to a prohibition on cattle imported into England from that kingdom, the exportation of all commodities, except victuals, servants, horses, and salt for the fisheries of New England and Newfoundland, from thence to the English plantations, was prohibited from the 25th of March, 1764. The exports allowed were useful to them, but prejudicial to Ireland, as they consisted of our people, our provisions, and a material for manufacture which we might have used more profitably on our own coasts.

In 1670 another act * passed in England, to prohibit from the 24th of March 1671 the exportation from the English plantations to Ireland of several materials for manufactures †, without first unloading in England

N

or

22d and 23d Ch. 2d, ch. 26.

† Sugar, tobacco, cotton, wool, indigo, steel or Jamaica wood, fustick, or other dying wood, the growth of the said plantations.

or Wales. We are informed by this act that the restraint of the exportation from the English plantations to Ireland was intended by the act of 1663 ; but the intention is not effectuated, though the importation of those commodities into Ireland *from England*, without first unloading there, is, in effect, prohibited by that act.

The prohibition of importing into Ireland any plantation goods, unless the same had been first landed in England, and had paid the duties, is made general, without any exception, by the English act of the 7th and 8th W. 3d, ch. 22.

But by subsequent British acts*, it is made lawful to import from his majesty's plantations, all goods of their growth or manufactures, the articles enumerated in those several acts excepted†.

By

* 4 Geo. 2, ch. 15. 6 G. 2, ch. 15. 4 G. 2, ch. 15.

† The articles in the last note, and also rice, molasses, beaver skins and other furs, copper ore, pitch, tar, turpentine,

By a late British act[†] there is a considerable extension of the exports from Ireland to the British plantations. But it is apprehended that this law will not answer the kind intentions of the British legislature. Denying the import from those countries to Ireland, is, in effect, preventing the export

N 2

from

tine, masts, yards and bowsprits, pimento, cocoa nuts, whale fins, raw silk, hides and skins, pot and pearl ashes, iron and lumber.

† From the 24th of June 1778, it shall be lawful to export from Ireland directly into any of the British plantations in America, or the West Indies, or into any of the settlements belonging to Great Britain on the coast of Africa, any goods being the produce or manufacture of Ireland (wool and woollen manufactures in all its branches, mixed or unmixed, cotton manufactures of all sorts mixed or unmixed, hats, glass, hops, gun-powder and coals, only excepted) and all goods, &c. of the growth, produce or manufacture of Great Britain, which may be legally imported from thence into Ireland (woollen manufactures in all its branches, and glass, excepted) and all foreign certificate goods that may be legally imported from Great Britain into Ireland. Two of the principal manufactures are excepted, and one of them closely connected with, if not a part of the linen manufacture.—18 Geo. 3. ch. 55.

from Ireland to those countries. Money cannot be expected for our goods there; we must take theirs in exchange, and this can never answer on the terms of our being obliged, in our return, to pass by Ireland, to land those goods in England, to ship them a second time, and then to sail back again to Ireland. No trade will bear such an unnecessary delay and expence. The quickness and the security of the return are the great inducements to every trade. One is lost and the other hazarded by such embarrassments; those who are not subject to them carry on the trade with such advantages over those who are so entangled, as totally to exclude them from it. This is no longer the subject of speculation, it has been proved by the experience of above seventy years. Since the year 1705, when liberty was given to import white and brown linens from Ireland into the English plantations, the quantities sent there directly from Ireland were at all times very inconsiderable; notwithstanding this liberty they were sent for the most part from Ireland to
England,

England, before any bounty was given on the exportation from thence, which did not take place until the year 1743, and from England the English plantations were supplied. There cannot be a more decisive proof that the liberty of exporting without a direct import in return, will not be beneficial to Ireland.

This country is the part of the British empire most conveniently situated for trade with the colonies ; if not suffered to have any beneficial intercourse with them, she will be deprived of one of the great advantages of her situation ; and such an obstruction to the prosperity of so considerable a part, must necessarily diminish the strength of the whole British empire.

Those laws laid Ireland under restraints highly prejudicial to her commerce and navigation. From those countries the materials for ship-building *, and some of those
used

* This appears by the English acts (3 and 4 Ann. ch. 10 3 Ann. ch. 13. 2 Geo 2d, ch. 35.) giving bounties on the importation of those article. into Great Britain

used in perfecting their staple manufactures were had ; Ireland was by those laws excluded from almost all the trade of three quarters of the globe, and from all direct beneficial intercourse with her fellow-subjects in those countries, which were partly stocked from her own loins. But still, though deprived at that time of the benefit of those colonies, she was not then considered as a colony herself ; her manufacturers were not in any other manner discouraged, her ports were left open, and she was at liberty to look for a market among strangers, though not among her fellow-subjects in Asia, Africa or America *. By the law of 1699 she

* Sir William Petty mentions that “ the English who have
 “ lands in Ireland were forced to trade only with strangers,
 “ and became unacquainted with their own country, and
 “ that England gained more than it lost by a free com-
 “ merce (with Ireland), as exporting thither three times
 “ as much as it received from hence ;” and mentions his
 surprize at their being debarred from bringing commodi-
 ties from America directly home, and being obliged to
 bring them round from England with extreme hazard and
 loss.—Political Survey of Ireland, p. 123.

she was, as to her staple manufacture, deprived of those resources; she was brought within a system of colonization, but on worse terms than any of the plantations who were allowed to trade with each other †.

She could send her principal materials for manufacture to England only; but those manufactures were encouraged in England and discouraged in Ireland. The probable consequence of which was, and the event has answered the expectation, that we should take those manufactures from that country, and that therefore in those various trades which employ the greatest numbers of men, the English should work for our people. The rich should work for the poor!

Let the histories of both kingdoms, and the statute books of both parliaments be examined, and no precedent will be found for

† 22d and 23d Ch. 2d, ch. 26. Sec. 11.

for the act of 1699, or for the system which it introduced.

The whole tenor of the English statutes relative to the trade of this country, and which by our act of the 10th of Hen. VII. became a part of our commercial constitution, breath a spirit totally repugnant to the principle of that law, and it is therefore with the utmost deference submitted to those who have the power to decide, whether this law was agreeable to the commercial constitution of Ireland, which for 500 years has never produced a similar instance.

It might be naturally supposed, by a person not versed in our story, that in the seventeenth century there had been some offence given, or some demerit on our part. He would be surprized to hear that during this period our loyalty had been exemplary, and our sufferings on that account great. In 1641, great numbers of the protestants of Ireland were destroyed, and many of them
were

were deprived of their property, and driven out of their country from their attachment to the English government in this kingdom, and to that religion and constitution which they happily enjoyed under it. At the revolution they were constant in the same principles, and successfully staked their lives and properties against domestick and foreign enemies, in support of the rights of the English crown, and of the religious and civil liberties of Britain and of Ireland. They bravely shared with her in all her dangers, and liberally partook of all her adversities. Whatever were their rights they had forfeited none of them. Whatever favours they enjoyed, they had new claims, from their merit and their sufferings, to a continuance of them. They now wanted more than ever the care of that fostering hand, which by rescuing them twice from oppression (obligations never to be forgotten by the protestants of Ireland) established the liberties, confirmed the strength, and raised the glory of the British empire.

In

In speaking of a commercial system it is not intended to touch upon the power of making or altering laws; the present subject leads us only to consider whether that power has been exercised, in any instances, contrary to reason, justice, and public utility,

When we consider, with the utmost deference to established authority, what is *reasonable, useful and just*, principles equally applicable to an independent or a subordinate, to a rich or a poor country—

Quod æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æque.--

Should any man talk of a conquest above 500 years since, between kingdoms long united, like those, in blood, interest and constitution, he does not speak to the purpose; he may as well talk of the conquest of the Norman, and use the antiquated language of obsolete despotism. I revere that conquest which has given to Ireland
the

the common law and the Magna Charta of England.

When we consider what is *reasonable, useful and just*, and address our sentiments to a nation renowned for wisdom and justice, should pride pervert the question, talk of the power of Britain, and in the character of that great country, ask, like Tancred, who shall controul me? I answer, like the sober Siffredi——*thyself*.

The power of regulating trade in a great empire is perverted, when exercised for the destruction of trade in any part of it; but whatever or wherever that power is, if it says to the subject on one side of a channel, you may work and navigate, buy and sell; and to the subject on the other side, you shall not work or navigate, buy or sell, but under such restrictions as will extinguish the genius, and unnerve the arm of industry; I will only say that it uses a language repugnant to the free spirit of commerce, and of the British and Irish constitution.

Great

Great eulogiums on the virtues of our people have been pronounced by some of the most respected English authors*; yet indolence is objected to them by those who discourage their industry; but they do not reflect that each of these proceeds from habit, and that the noble observation made on virtue in general is equally applicable to industry—the day that it loses its liberty half of its vigour is gone †.

The great expenditure of money by England, on account of this country, is an argument more fit for the limited views of a compting-house, than for the enlarged policy of statesmen deliberating on the general good of a great empire.

Very large sums, it is true, were advanced by England for the relief and recovery of Ireland, but these have been reimbursed fifty fold by the profits and advantages which

* Sir John Davis and Sir Edward Cooke.

† Νμισυ Γαρ ἰάξει; ἡ αποσπαινται Δελιον ημας.

Homer, as quoted by Longinus.

which have since arisen to England from its trade and intercourse with this kingdom. This argument may be further pursued, but accounts of mutual benefits between intimate friends and near relations should be always kept open, and every attempt to strike a balance between them tends rather to raise jealousies than to promote good will.

It has been said that the interest of England required that those restraints should be imposed. The contrary has been shewn; one of the maxims of her own law instructs us to enjoy our own property so as not to injure that of our neighbour *; and the true interest of a great country lies in the population, wealth and strength of the whole empire.

If this restrictive system was founded in justice and sound policy towards the middle and at the conclusion of the last century, the present state of the British empire requires new counsels, and a system of com-
merce

* Sic utere tuo, alienum non Lædas.

merce and of policy totally different from those which the circumstances of these countries, in the years 1663, 1670 and 1698, might have suggested.

But it is time to give your lordship a little relief, before I enter into a new part of my subject.

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

T H E

THE
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
OF
IRELAND
CONSIDERED.
EIGHTH LETTER.

E I G H T H L E T T E R.

Dublin, 6th September, 1779.

* Sir William Petty's Political Survey of Ireland, p. 19.

† Sir William Temple, 3 Vol. p. 7.

adventurers or soldiers seated themselves here on account of the satisfaction made to them in lands, the country had been by the rebellion of 1641, and the plague that followed it, nearly desolate. At the restoration almost the whole property of the kingdom was in a state of the utmost anarchy and confusion. To satisfy the clashing interests of the numerous claimants, and to determine the various and intricate disputes that arose relative to titles, required a considerable length of time. Peace and settlement, or, to use the words of one of the acts of parliament * of that time, the repairing the ruins and desolation of the kingdom were the great objects of this period.

The English law † of 1663, restraining the exportation from Ireland to America, was at that time, and for some years after, scarcely felt in this kingdom, which had then little to export except live cattle, not proper for so distant a market.

The

* The act of Explanation.

† 15 Ch. II.

The act of settlement passed in Ireland the year before this restrictive law, and the explanatory statute for the settlement of this kingdom, was not enacted until two years after. The country continued for a considerable time in a state of litigation, which is never favorable to industry. In 1661 the people must have been poor; the number of them of all degrees, who paid poll money in that year was about 360,000*. In 1672, when the country had greatly improved, the manufacture bestowed upon a year's exportation from Ireland, did not exceed eight thousand pounds†, and the clothing trade had not then arrived to what it had been before the last rebellion. But still the kingdom had much increased in wealth, tho' not in manufactured exports. The customs which set in 1656 for 12,000l. yearly, were in 1672 worth 80,000l. ‡ yearly, and the improvement in domestic wealth, that is to say, in building, planting, furniture,

O 2 coaches,

* Sir W. Petty, p. 9.

† Ib. 9. and 110.

‡ Ib. 82.

coaches, &c. is said to have advanced from 1652 to 1673 in a proportion of from one to four. Sir William Petty in the year 1672 complains not of the restraints on the exportation from Ireland to America *, but of the prohibition of exporting our cattle to England, and of our being obliged to unlade in that kingdom † the ships bound from America to Ireland; the latter regulation he considers as highly prejudicial to this country ‡.

The immediate object of Ireland at this time, seems to have been to get materials to employ her people at home without thinking of foreign exportations. When we advanced in the export of our woollen goods, the law of 1663 †, which excluded them from the American markets, must have been a great loss to this kingdom; and after we were allowed to export our linens to the British colonies in America, the restraints imposed

* Sir W. Petty, p. 9 and 10.

‡ lb. 34, 71, 125.

† 15 Ch. II. ch. 7.

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imposed by the law of 1670 upon our importations from thence became more prejudicial, and will be much more so if ever the late extension of our exports to America should under those restraints have any effect. For it is certainly a great discouragement to the carrying on trade with any country where we are allowed only to sell our manufactures and produce, but are not permitted to carry from them directly to our own country their principal manufactures or produce. The people to whom we are thus permitted to sell, want the principal inducement for dealing with us, and the great spring of commerce, which is mutual exchange, is wanting between us.

As the British legislature has thought it reasonable to extend, in a very considerable degree, our exportation to their colonies, and has doubtless intended that this favour should be useful to Ireland, it is hoped that those restraints on the importation from thence, which must render that favour of little effect, will be no longer continued.

From

From those considerations it is evident that many strong reasons respecting Ireland are now to be found against the continuance of those restrictive laws of 1663 and 1670, that did not exist at the time of making them.

The prohibition of 1699 was immediately and universally felt in this country; but in the course of human events various and powerful reasons have arisen against the continuance of that statute, which did not exist, and could not have been foreseen when it was enacted.

At the restoration the inhabitants of Ireland consisted of three different nations, English, Scotch and Irish, divided by political and religious principles, exasperated against each other by former animosities, and by present contests for property. When the settlement of the country was completed, the people became industrious, manufactures greatly increased, and the kingdom began to flourish. The prohibition of exporting cattle to England, and, perhaps, that
of

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of importing directly from America the materials of other manufactures, obliged the Irish to increase, and to manufacture their own material. They made so great a progress in both, from 1672 to 1687, that in the latter year the exports of the woollen manufacture alone amounted in value to 70,521*l.* 14*s.* 0*d.*

But the religious and civil animosities continued. The papists objected to the settlement of property made after the restoration*, wished to reverse the outlawries and to rescind the laws on which that settlement was founded, hoped to establish their own as the national religion, to get the power of the kingdom into their own hands, and to effect all those purposes by a king of their own religion. They endeavoured to attain all those objects by laws † passed at a meeting, which they called a parliament, held under this prince

* Carte, 2 Vol. 425 to 428, 465.

† Archb. Bishop King's State, 209. James the 2d in his speech from the throne in Ireland, recommended the repeal of the act of settlement.

prince after his abdication ; and by their conduct at this period, as well as in the year 1642 *, shewed dispositions unfavourable to the subordination of Ireland to the crown of England. They could not be supposed to be well affected to that great Prince who defeated all their purposes.

At the time of the revolution the numbers of our people were again very much reduced ; but a great majority of the remaining inhabitants consisted of papists. Those, notwithstanding their disappointment at that æra, were thought to entertain expectations of the restoration of their popish king, and designs unfavorable to the established constitution in church and state. It is not to the present purpose to inquire how long
this

* Their demands in 1642 were the restitution of all the plantation lands to the old inhabitants, repeal of Poyning's act, &c. Macaulay's Hist. 3 Vol. 222. In the meeting, called a parliament, held by James in Ireland, they repealed the acts of settlement and explanation, passed a law that the parliament of England cannot bind Ireland, and against writs of error and appeals to England.

this disposition prevailed. It cannot be doubted but that this was the opinion conceived of their views and principles at the time of passing this law of the year 1699.

England could not then consider a country under such unfortunate circumstances as any great additional strength to it. Foreign protestants were invited to settle in it, and the emigration of papists in great numbers to other countries was allowed, if not encouraged. Though at this period a regard to liberty as well as to œconomy, occasioned the disbanding of all the army in England, except 7000, it was thought necessary for the security of Ireland that an army of 12,000 men should be kept there; and for many years afterwards it was not allowed that this army should be recruited in this kingdom. This distinction of parties in Ireland was in those times the main spring in every movement relative to that kingdom, and affected not only political but commercial regulations. The reason assigned by the English statute, allowing the exportation
of

of Irish linen cloth to the plantations, is, after reciting the restrictive law of 1663*, “*yet forasmuch as the protestant interest of Ireland ought to be supported, by giving the utmost encouragement to the linen manufactures of that kingdom, in tender regard to her majesty’s good protestant subjects of her said kingdom, be it enacted,*” &c.

The papists, then disabled from acquiring permanent property in lands, had not the same interest with protestants in the defence of their country and in the prosperity of the British empire. But those seeds of disunion and diffidence no longer remain. No man looks now for the return of the exiled family, any more than for that of Perken Warbec; and the repeal of magna charta is as much expected as of the act of settlement. The papists, indulged with the exercise of their religious worship, and now at liberty to acquire permanent property in

* 3d and 4th Anne, ch. 8.

in lands, are interested as well as protestants in the security and prosperity of this country; and sensible of the benign influence of our sovereign, and of the protection and happiness which they enjoy under his reign, seem to be as well affected to the king and to the constitution of the state as any other class of subjects, and at this most dangerous crisis have contributed their money to raise men for his majesty's service, and declared their readiness, had the laws permitted, to have taken arms for the defence of their country. They owe much to the favour and protection of the crown, and to the liberal and benevolent spirit of the British legislature which led the way to their relief, and they are peculiarly interested to cultivate the good opinion of their sovereign, and of their fellow-subjects in Great Britain.

The numbers of our people, since the year 1698, are more than doubled; but in point of real strength to the British empire are increased in a proportion of above eight

to one. In the year 1698, the numbers of our people did not much, if at all, exceed one million. Of these 300,000 are thought to be a liberal allowance for protestants of all denominations. It is now supposed that there are not less in this kingdom than 2,500,000 inhabitants, loyal and affectionate subjects to his majesty, and well-affected to the constitution and happiness of their country.

A political and commercial constitution, if it could have been considered as wisely framed for the years 1663, 1670 and 1698, ought to be reconsidered in the year 1779; what might have been good and necessary policy in the government of one million of men divided among themselves, and a majority of them not to be relied upon in support of their king and of the laws and constitution of their country, is bad policy in the government of two millions and a half of men now united among themselves, and all interested in the support of the crown, the laws, and the constitution.

What

What might have been sufficient employment, and the means of acquiring a competent subsistence for one million of people, when a man by working two days in the week might have earned a sufficient support for him and his family, will never answer for two millions and a half of people*, when the hard labour of six days in the week can scarcely supply a scanty subsistence. Nor can the resources which enabled us in the last century to remit 200,000*l.* yearly to England†, support remittances to the amount of more than six times that sum.

Let the reasons for this restrictive system at the time of its formation be examined, and let us judge impartially, whether any one of the purposes then intended has been answered. The reasons respecting America, were to confine the Plantation-trade to England, and to make that country a store-house of all commodities for its colonies.

But

* Sir W. Petty's Survey.

† *Ib.* 117.

But the commercial jealousy that has prevailed among the different states of Europe, has made it difficult for any nation to keep great markets to herself in exclusion of the rest of the world. It was not foreseen at those periods that the colonies, whilst they all continued dependent, should have traded with foreign nations, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of Great Britain to prevent it. It was not foreseen that those colonies would have refused to have taken any commodities whatever from their parent country, that they should afterwards have separated themselves from her empire, declared themselves independent, resisted her fleets and armies, obtained the most powerful alliances, and occasioned the most dangerous and destructive war in which Great Britain was ever engaged. Nor could it have been foreseen that Ireland, excluded from almost all direct intercourse with them, should have been nearly undone by the contest. The reasons then respecting America no longer exist, and whatever may be the event of the conflict, will never exist to the extent
 expected

expected when this system of restraints and penalties was adopted.

The reasons relating to Ireland have failed also. The circumstances of this country relative to the woollen manufacture are totally changed since the year 1699. The lords and commons of England appear to have founded the law of that year on the proportion which they supposed that the charge of the woollen manufacture in England then bore to the charge of that manufacture in Ireland. In the representation from the commissioners of trade, laid before both houses†, they think it a reasonable conjecture to take the difference between both wool and labour in the two countries to be one third; and estimating on that supposition, they find that 43½ per cent, may be laid on broad cloth exported out of Ireland, more than on the like cloth exported out of England, to bring them both
to

† Order 14th March 1698, Lords Journ. v. 16. Eng. Com. Journs. 18th Jan. 1698, 12 v. 440.

to an equality. This must have been an alarming representation to England.

But if those calculations were just at the time, which is very doubtful, the supposed facts on which they were founded do certainly no longer exist. Wool is now generally at a higher price in Ireland than in England, and the trifling difference in the price of labour is more than over-balanced by this and the other circumstances in favour of England, which have been before stated; and that those facts supposed in 1698, and the inferences drawn from them, have no foundation in the present state of this country is plain from the experience of every day, which shews that instead of our underselling the English, they undersell us in our own markets.

Besides our exclusion from foreign markets, England had two objects in the discouragement of our woollen trade.

It was intended that Ireland should send her wool to England, and take from that
try

country her woollen manufactures*. It has been already shewn that the first object has not been attained; the second has been carried so far as, for the future, to defeat its own purpose. Whilst our own manufacturers were starving for want of employment, and our wool sold for less than one half of its usual price, we have imported from England in the years 1777 and 1778 woollen goods to the enormous amount of 715,740l 13s 0d as valued at our custom-house, and of the manufactures of linen, cotton and silk mixed, to the amount of 98,086l 1s 11d, making in the whole in

P those

* The commissioners of trade, in their representation dated the 11th November 1697, relating to the trade between England and Ireland, advise a duty to be laid upon the importation of oil, upon teasles, whether imported or *growing* there, and upon *all the utensils* employed in the making any woollen manufactures, on the utensils of worsted-combers, and particularly a duty by the yard upon all cloth and woollen stuffs, except frizes, before they are taken off the loom. Eng. Com. Journ. 12 v. 428.

those two years of distress 813,826l 14s 11d†. Between 20 and 30,000 of our manufacturers in those branches were in those two years supported by public charity. From this fact it is hoped that every reasonable man will allow the necessity of our using our own manufactures. Agreements among our people for this purpose are not, as it has been supposed, a new idea in this country. It was never so universal as at present, but has been frequently resorted to in times of distress. In the sessions of 1703, 1705 and 1707‡, the house of commons resolved unanimously, that it would greatly conduce to the relief of the poor and the good of the kingdom, that the inhabitants thereof should use none other but the manufactures of this kingdom in their apparel and the furniture of their houses; and in the last of those sessions the members engaged their honours

† See in the appendix an account of those articles imported from England into Ireland, for ten years, commencing in 1769, and ending in 1778.

‡ Com. Journ. 3 vol. 348, 548.

honours to each other, that they would conform to the said resolution. The not importing goods from England is one of the remedies recommended by the council of trade in 1676 for alleviating some distress that was felt at that time*; and sir William Temple, a zealous friend to the trade and manufactures of England, recommends to lord Essex, then lord lieutenant, “to introduce as far as can be, a vein of parsimony throughout the country, in all things that are not perfectly the native growths and manufactures. §”

The people of England can not reasonably object to a conduct of which they have given a memorable example†. In 1697 the English house of lords presented an address to king William to discourage the use and wearing of all sorts of furniture and cloths, not of the growth or manufac-

P 2

ture

* Sir W. Petty's Political Survey, 123.

§ Sir W. Temple, 3 v. 11.

† Lords Journ. 16th Feb. 1697.

ture of that kingdom, and beseech him by his royal example effectually to encourage the use and wearing of all sorts of furniture and wearing cloths that are the growth of that kingdom, or manufactured there; and king William assures them that he would give the example to his subjects, and would endeavour to make it effectually followed. The reason assigned by the lords for this address was, that the trade of the nation had suffered by the late long and expensive war. But it does not appear that there was any pressing necessity at the time, or that their manufacturers were starving for want of employment.

Common sense must discover to every man that, where foreign trade is restrained, discouraged, or prevented in any country, and where that country has the materials of manufactures, a fruitful soil, and numerous inhabitants, the home-trade is its best resource. If this is thought, by men of great knowledge, to be the most valuable of all trades,

trades§, because it makes the speediest and the surest returns, and because it increases at the same time two capitals in the same country, there is no nation on the globe, whose wealth, population, strength and happiness would be promoted by such a trade in a greater degree than ours*.

Two other reasons were assigned for this prohibition,--that the Irish had shewn themselves unwilling to promote the linen manufacture†; and that there were great quantities of wool in Ireland. But they have since cultivated the linen trade with great success, and great numbers of their
people

§ See Dr. Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

* The consumption of our own people is the best and greatest market for the product and manufactures of our own country. Foreign trade is but a part of the benefit arising from the woollen manufacture, and the least part; it is a small article in respect to the benefit arising to the community; and Dr. Smith affirms that all the foreign markets of England cannot be equal to one-twentieth part of her own. Dr. Smith's *memoirs of wool*, 2 vol. 113, 529, 530 and 556, from the British merchant and Dr. Davenant.

† Address of Eng. Commons, ante.

people are employed in it. Of late years, by the operation of the land-carriage bounty agriculture has increased in a degree never before known in this country; extensive tracts of lands, formerly sheep-pasture, are now under tillage, and much greater rents are given for that purpose than can be paid by stocking with sheep; the quantity of wool is greatly diminished from what it was in the year 1699, supposing it to have been then equal to the quantity in 1687^{*}; it has been for several years lessening, and is not likely to be increased. In those two important circumstances the grounds of the apprehensions of England have ceased, and the state of Ireland has been materially altered since the year 1699.

Another reason respecting England and foreign states, particularly France, has failed. England was in 1698, in possession of the woollen trade in most of the foreign markets, and expected still to continue to supply

* King's Stat. 160, 161.

supply them, as appears by the preamble of her statute passed in that year.

She at that time expected to keep this manufacture to herself. The people of Leeds, Hullifax and Newberry† petition the house of commons, “that by some means “the woollen manufacture may be prevented from being set up in foreign countries;” and the commons in their address, mention the keeping it as much as possible *entire* to themselves. But experience has proved the vanity of those expectations; several other countries cultivate this trade with success. France now undersells her. England has lost some of those markets, and it is thought probable that Ireland, if admitted to them, might have preserved and may now recover the trade that England has lost.

A perseverance in this restrictive policy will be ruinous to the trade of Great Britain. Whatever may be the state of America, great numbers of the inhabitants of Ireland. if the circumstances of this country shall continue to be the same as at present in respect
of

† Eng. Com. Journ. 12 v. 514, 523, 528.

of trade, will emigrate there; this will give strength to that part of the empire on which Great Britain can least, and take it from that part on which at present she may most securely depend. But this is not all the mischief; those emigrants will be mostly manufacturers, and will transfer to America the woollen and linen manufactures, to the great prejudice of those trades in England, Scotland and Ireland; and then one of the means used to keep the colonies dependent, by introducing this country into a system of colonization, will be the occasion of lessening, if not dissolving, the connection between them and their parent state.

Great Britain, weakened in her extremities, should fortify the heart of her empire; Great Britain, with powerful foreign enemies united in lasting bonds against her, and with scarcely any foreign alliance to sustain her, should exert every possible effort to strengthen herself at home. The numbers of people in Ireland have more than doubled in fourscore years. How much more rapid would be the increase if the growth of
the

the human race was cherished by finding sufficient employment and food for this prolific nation! it would probably double again in half a century. What a vast accession of strength such numbers of brave and active men, living almost within the sound of a trumpet, must bring to Great Britain, now said to be decreasing considerably in population! a greater certainly than double those numbers dispersed in distant parts of the globe, the expence of defending and governing of which must at all times be great. Sir W. Temple * in 1673 takes notice of the circumstances prejudicial to the trade and riches of Ireland, which had hitherto, he says, made it of more loss than value to England. They have already been mentioned. The course of time has removed some of them, and the wisdom and philanthropy of Britain may remove the rest. “ Without
 “ these circumstances, (says that honest and
 “ able statesman,) the native fertility of the
 “ soils and seas in so many rich commodities,
 “ improved

“ improved by multitudes of people and industry, with the advantage of so many excellent havens, and a situation so commodious for all sorts of foreign trade, must needs have rendered this kingdom one of the richest in Europe, and made a mighty increase both of strength and revenue to the crown of England*.”

During this century Ireland has been without exaggeration, a mine of wealth to England, far beyond what any calculation has yet made it. When poor and thinly inhabited she was an expence and a burden to England; when she had acquired some proportion of riches and grew more numerous, she was one of the principal sources of her wealth. When she becomes poor again, those advantages are greatly diminished. The exports from Great Britain to Ireland in 1778† were less, than the medium value of the four preceding

* See Sir John Davis's Discourses, p. 5, 6, 194.

† Summary of imports and exports to and from Ireland, laid before the British house of commons in 1779.

preceding years in a sum of 634,444*l.* 3*s.* 0*d.*; and in the year 1779 Great Britain is obliged, partly at her own expence, to defend this country, and for that purpose has generously bestowed out of her own exchequer a large sum of money. Those facts demonstrate that the poverty of Ireland ever has been a drain, and her riches an influx of wealth to England, to which the greater part of it will ever flow, and it imports not to that country through what channel: but the source must be cleared from obstructions, or the stream cannot continue to flow.

Such a liberal system would increase the wealth of this kingdom by means that would strengthen the hands of government, and promote the happiness of the people. Ireland would be then able to contribute largely to the support of the British empire, not only from the increase of her wealth, but from the more equal distribution of it into a greater number of hands among the various orders of the community. The present inability of Ireland arises principally from this circumstance,

circumstance, that her lower and middle classes have little or no property, and are not able, to any considerable amount, either to pay taxes, or to consume those commodities that are the usual subjects of them; and this has been the consequence of the laws which prevent trade and discourage manufactures. The same quantity of property distributed through the different classes of the people would supply resources much superior to those which can be found in the present state of Ireland*. The increase of people there under its present restraints makes but a small addition to the resources of the state in respect of taxes†. In 1685 the amount

* Those states are least able to pay great charge for public disbursements, whose wealth resteth chiefly in the hands of the nobility and gentry. *Bac.* 1 Vol. p. 10. *Smith's Wealth of Nations*, 2 Vol. p. 22.

† A very judicious friend of mine has, with great pains and attention, made a calculation of the numbers of people in Ireland in the year 1774, and he makes the numbers of people to amount to 2,325,041, but supposes his calculation to be under the real number. I have therefore followed the calculation commonly received, which makes their
number

of the inland excise in Ireland was 75,169*l*. In 1762 it increased only to 92,842*l*. Those years are taken as periods of a considerable degree of prosperity in Ireland. The people had increased from 1685 to 1762 in a proportion of nearly 7 to 4*, which appears from this circumstance, that in 1685 hearth money amounted to 32,659*l*. and in 1762 to 56,611*l*. At the former period the law made to restrain and discourage the principal trade and manufacture of Ireland had not been made. There were then vast numbers of sheep in Ireland, and the woollen manufacture was probably in a flourishing state. At the former of those periods the lower classes of the people were able to consume excisable
commo-

number amount to 2,500,000. He computes, as has been before mentioned, the persons who reside in houses of one hearth, to be 1,877,220. Those find it very difficult to pay hearth-money, and are thought to be unable to pay any other taxes. If this is so, according to this calculation, there are but 447,821 people in Ireland able to pay taxes.

* Ireland was much more numerous in 1685 than at any time, after the revolution, during that century, there having been a great waste of people in the rebellion at that
era.

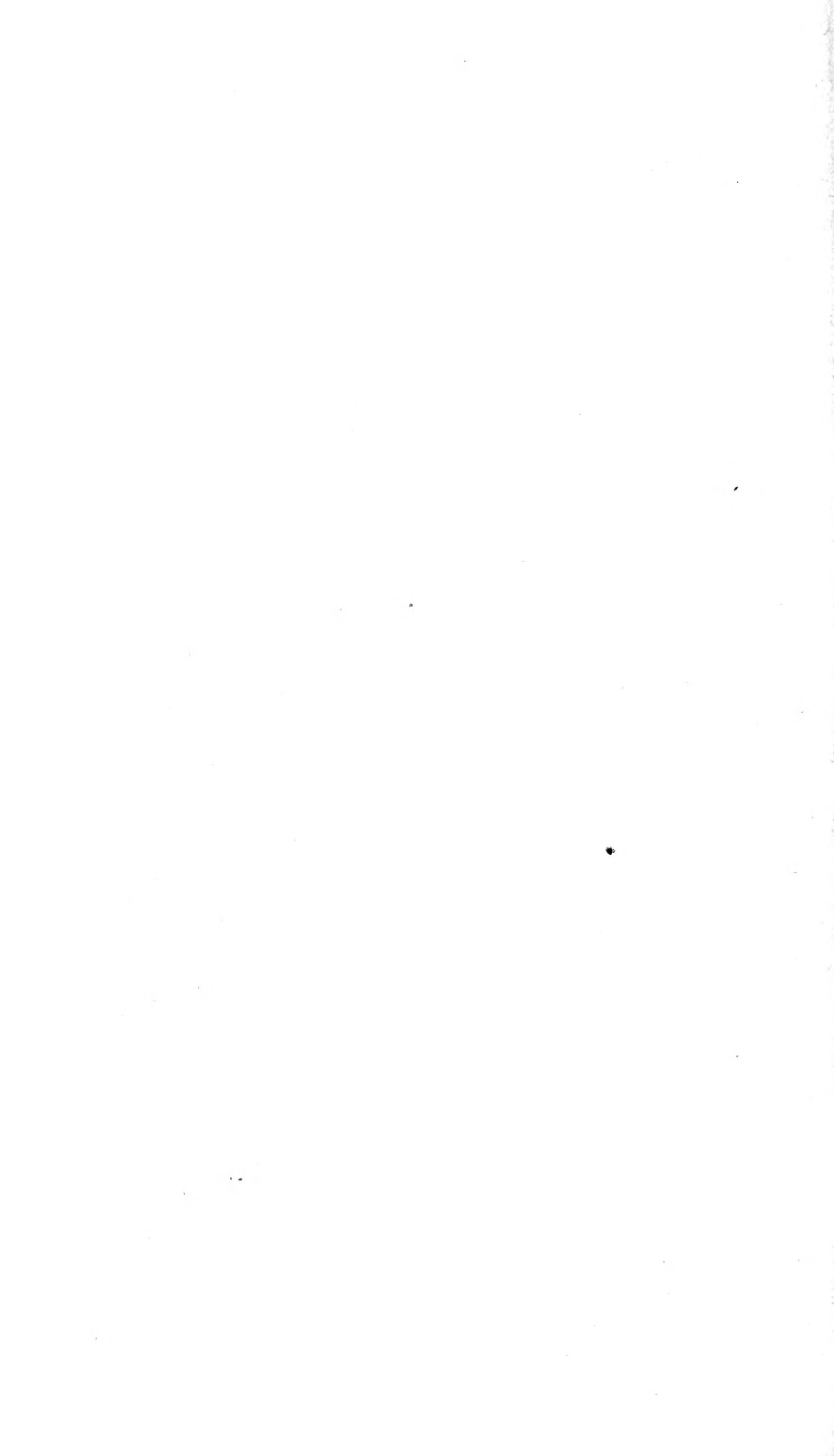
commodities. In the latter they lived for the most part on the immediate produce of the soil. The numbers of people in a state, like those of a private family, if the individuals have the means of acquiring, add to the wealth, and if they have not those means, to the poverty of the community. Population is not always a proof of the prosperity of a nation; the people may be very numerous, and very poor and wretched. A temperate climate, fruitful soil, bays and rivers well stocked with fish, the habits of life among the lower classes, and a long peace, are sufficient to increase the numbers of people; these are the true wealth of every state that has wisdom to encourage the industry of its inhabitants, and a country which supplies in abundance the materials for that industry. If the state, or the family should discourage industry, and not allow one of the family to work, because another is of the same trade, the consequences to the great or the little community, must be equally fatal.

Is there not business enough in this great world for the people of two adjoining islands without depressing the inhabitants of one of them? let the magnanimity and philanthropy of Great Britain address her poor sister kingdom in the same language which the good-natured uncle Toby uses to the fly, in setting it at liberty—"poor fly, there's room enough for thee and me!"

I have the honour to be,

My Lord, &c.

THE



T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.
N I N T H L E T T E R.

T H E
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
O F
I R E L A N D
C O N S I D E R E D.

N I N T H L E T T E R.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 10th Sept. 1779.

BESIDES those already mentioned, various other commercial restraints and prohibitions give the British trader and manufacturer many great and important advantages over the Irish. Whilst our markets are at all times open to all their productions and manufactures, with inconsiderable duties on the import, their markets are open or shut against us as suits their conveniency. On several articles of the first importance, and on almost all our own manufactures, im-

ported into Great Britain, duties are imposed equal to a prohibition. In the instance of woollen-goods, their's in our ports pay but a small duty, our's in their ports are loaded with duties *, which amount to a prohibition † ; their's on the exportation are subject to no duty ; our's, if permitted to be exported, would, as the law now stands, be subject to a duty ‡ over and above that payable for alnage and for the alnager's fee. If the act of 1699 was repealed, the English would still have many great advantages over us in the woollen trade.

In our staple manufacture, the bounties given on the exportation of white and brown
Irish

* 12th Ch. II. ch. 4. Eng.

† Yet in favour of Great Britain, old and new drapery imported into Ireland from other countries are subject to duties equal to a prohibition. Ir. act 14th and 15th Ch. II. ch. 8.

‡ On every piece of old drapery exported, containing 36 yards, and so for a greater or lesser quantity 3s. 4d. and of new drapery 9d. for the subsidy of alnage and alnager's fee. See 17th and 18th Ch. II. ch. 15. Ir. But the English have taken off these and all other duties from their manufactures made or mixed with wool. Eng. act 11 and 12 W. III. ch. 20.

Irish linen from Great-Britain would still continue that trade in the hands of the British merchant. On all coloured linens a duty* equal to a prohibition is imposed on the importation into Great-Britain; but their's imported to us are subject † to ten per cent, and under that duty they have imported considerably. This inequality of duty and the bounty given by the British act of the tenth of Geo. the 3d on the exportation of their chequered and striped linens from Great-Britain, secures to them the continuance of the great superiority which they have acquired over us in those very valuable branches of this trade. In many other articles they have given themselves great advantages. Beer they export to us in such quantities as almost to ruin our brewery; but they prevent our exportation to them by duties, laid on the import there, equal to a prohibition. Of malt they make large exports to us, to the prejudice of our agriculture, but have absolutely

* Thirty per cent. by the British acts of 9 and 10 Anne, ch. 39, and 12 Anne, ch. 9.

† This tax is ad valorem, and the linen not valued

absolutely prohibited our exportation of that commodity to them. Some manufactures they retain solely to themselves, which we are prohibited from exporting, and cannot import from any country but Great Britain, as glass of all kinds. Hops they do not allow us to import from any other place, and in a facetious style of interdiction pronounce such importation to be a common nuisance*. They go further, and by laying a duty on the export, and denying the draw-back, oblige the Irish consumer to pay a tax appropriated, it is said, to the payment of a British debt. I shall make no political, but the subject requires a commercial observation—it is this—the man who keeps a market solely to himself in exclusion of all others, whether he appears as buyer † or seller, fixes his own price, and becomes the arbiter of the profit and loss of every customer,

The

* Brit. Act, 9 Ann. ch. 12.

† Hence it is that the price of wool in England is said to be 50 per cent. below the market price of Europe, Smith's Memoirs of wool.

The various manufactures * made or mixed with cotton, are subject by several British acts to duties on the importation, amounting to 25 per cent.

By another act, penalties † are imposed on wearing any of those manufactures in Great-Britain, unless made in that country. Those laws have effectually excluded the Irish manufactures in all those branches from the British markets, and it has been already shewn, that they cannot be sent to the American. From Great Britain into Ireland all those articles are imported in immense quantities, being subject here to duties amounting to ten per cent. only.

But it would be tedious to descend into a further detail, and disgusting to write a book of rates instead of a letter ‡.

* 12 Ch. II. ch. 5. 3 and 4 Ann. ch. 4. 4 and 5 W. and M. ch. 5.

† 7 G. I. ch. 7.

‡ When the commercial restraints of Ireland are the subject, a source of occasional and ruinous restrictions ought

Their superior capitals and expertness, give them decisive advantages in every species of trade and manufacture. By the extension of the commerce of Ireland, Great Britain would acquire new and important advantages, not only by the wealth it would bring to that country, and the encrease of strength to the empire, but by opening to the British merchant new sources of trade from Ireland.

It is time to draw to a conclusion. I have reviewed my letters to your lordship for the purpose of avoiding every possible occasion of offence; I flatter myself every reader will discern that they have been written with upright and friendly intentions, not to excite jealousies but to remove prejudices, to moderate and conciliate, and that they are intended as an appeal, not to the passions of the multitude, but to the wisdom, justice and generosity of Britain. Shakespeare could
place

not to be passed over. Since the year 1740, there have been 24 embargoes in Ireland, one of which lasted three years.

place a tongue in every wound of Cæsar, but Antony meant to inflame; and the only purpose of those letters is to persuade. I have therefore not even removed the mantle, except where necessity required it.

In extraordinary cases where the facts are stronger than the voice of the pleader, it is not unusual to allow the client to speak for himself. Will you, my lord, one of the leading advocates for Ireland, allow her to address her elder sister, and to state her own case; not in the strains of passion or resentment, nor in the tone of remonstrance, but with a modest enumeration of unexaggerated facts in pathetic simplicity; she will tell her, with a countenance full of affection and tenderness, “ I have received from you invaluable gifts, the law of * common right, your great charter, and the fundamentals of your constitution. The temple of liberty in your country, has been frequently fortified, improved and embellished; mine erect-
“ ed

* The common law of England.

“ ed many centuries since the perfect mo-
 “ del of your own ; you will not suffer me
 “ to strengthen, secure, or repair ; firm and
 “ well cemented as it is, it must moulder un-
 “ der the hand of Time for want of that at-
 “ tention, which is due to the venerable
 “ fabrick *. We are connected by the strong-
 “ est ties of natural affection, common secu-
 “ rity, and a long interchange of the kindest
 “ offices on both sides. But for more than a
 “ century you have, in some instances, mis-
 “ taken our mutual interest. I sent you my
 “ herds and my flocks, filled your people
 “ with abundance, and gave them leisure
 “ to attend to more profitable pursuits, than
 “ the humble employment of shepherds and
 “ of herds-men. But you rejected my pro-
 “ duce †, and reprobated this intercourse in
 “ terms the most opprobrious. I submitted ;
 “ the temporary loss was mine, but the per-
 “ petual

* Heads of bills for passing into a law the habeas corpus act, and that for making the tenure of judges during good behaviour, have repeatedly passed the Irish house of commons, but were not returned.

† The Eng. act of Ch. II. ch. calls the importation of cattle from Ireland, a common nuisance.

“petual prejudice your own. I incited my
 “children to industry, and gave them my
 “principal materials to manufacture. Their
 “honest labours were attended with mode-
 “rate success, but sufficient to awaken the
 “commercial jealousy of some of your sons;
 “indulging their groundless apprehensions,
 “you desired my materials and discouraged
 “the industry of my people. I complied
 “with your wishes, and gave to your chil-
 “dren the bread of my own; but the ene-
 “mies of our race were the gainers; they
 “applied themselves with tenfold increase
 “to those pursuits which were restrained in
 “my people, who would have added to the
 “wealth and strength of your empire what
 “by this fatal error you transferred to fo-
 “reign nations. You held out another ob-
 “ject to me with promises of the utmost
 “encouragement. I wanted the means, but
 “I obtained them from other countries, and
 “have long cultivated, at great expence and
 “with the most unremitted efforts, that
 “species of industry which you recommend-
 “ed. You soon united with another great
 “family,

“ family, engaged in the same pursuit,
 “ which you were also obliged to encourage
 “ among them, and afterwards embarked in
 “ it yourself, and became my rival in that
 “ which you had destined for my principal
 “ support. This support is now become
 “ inadequate to the increased number of
 “ my offspring, many of whom want the
 “ means of subsistence. My ports are ever
 “ hospitably open for your reception, and
 “ shut, whenever your interest requires it,
 “ against all others; but your’s are in many
 “ instances barred against me, with your
 “ dominions in Asia, Africa and America;
 “ my sons were long deprived of all benefi-
 “ cial intercourse, and yet to those colonies
 “ I transported my treasures for the payment
 “ of your armies, and in a war waged
 “ for their defence, one hundred thousand
 “ of my sons fought by your side*. Con-
 “ quest attended our arms. You gained a
 “ great increase of empire and of commerce;
 “ and

* This number of Irishmen was computed to have served in the fleets and armies of Great Britain during the last war.

“ and my people a further extension of re-
 “ straints and prohibitions†. In those ef-
 “ forts I have exhausted my strength, mort-
 “ gaged my territories, and am now sinking
 “ under the pressure of enormous debts con-
 “ tracted from my zealous attachment to
 “ your interests, to the extension of your
 “ empire and the encrease of your glory.
 “ By the present unhappy war for the reco-
 “ very of those colonies, from which they
 “ were long excluded, my children are re-
 “ duced to the lowest ebb of poverty and
 “ distress. It is true, you have lately with
 “ the kindest intentions, allowed me an ex-
 “ tensive liberty of selling to the inhabitants
 “ of those parts of your empire, but they
 “ have no inducement to buy, because I can-
 “ not take their produce in return. Your
 “ liberality has opened a new fountain, but
 “ your

† The Furs of Canada, the Indigo of Florida, the
 sugars of Dominica, St. Vincent's and the Grenades, with
 every other valuable production of those acquisitions, Ire-
 land was prohibited to receive but through another chan-
 nel. Her poverty scarcely gathered a crum from the sumptu-
 ous table of her sister.

“ your caution will not suffer me to draw
 “ from it. The stream of commerce, intend-
 “ ed to refresh the exhausted strength of my
 “ children, flies untasted from their parched
 “ lips.

“ The common parent of all has been e-
 “ qually beneficent to us both. We both
 “ possess in great abundance the means
 “ of industry and of happiness. My fields
 “ are not less fertile, nor my harbours less
 “ numerous than your’s. My sons are not
 “ less renowned than your own for valour,
 “ justice and generosity. Many of them
 “ are your descendants, and have some of
 “ your best blood in their veins. But the
 “ narrow policy of man has counteracted
 “ the instincts and the bounties of nature.
 “ In the midst of those fertile fields, some of
 “ my children perish before my eyes for want
 “ of food, and others fly for refuge to hos-
 “ tile nations.

“ Suffer

“ Suffer no longer, respected sister, the
 “ narrow jealousy of commerce to mislead
 “ the wisdom and to impair the strength of
 “ the state. Encrease my resources, they
 “ shall be your’s, my riches and strength, my
 “ poverty and weakness will become your
 “ own. What a triumph to our enemies,
 “ and what an affliction to me, in the pre-
 “ sent distracted circumstances of the em-
 “ pire, to see my people reduced, by the
 “ necessity of avoiding famine, to the reso-
 “ lution of trafficking almost solely with
 “ themselves! great and powerful enemies
 “ are combined against you, many of your
 “ distant connections have deserted you,
 “ encrease your strength at home, open
 “ and extend the numerous resources of my
 “ country, of which you have not hitherto
 “ availed yourself or allowed me the benefit.
 “ Our encreased force and the full exertions
 “ of our strength will be the most effectual
 “ means of resisting the combination formed
 “ against you by foreign enemies and distant
 “ subjects,

240 COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS, &c. LET. 9.

“ subjects, and of giving new lustre to our
“ crowns, and happiness and contentment to
“ our people.”

T H E E N D.

Since these papers were sent to the press, the Commons of Ireland have, in their address to his majesty, resolved unanimously, “that it is not by temporary expedients, “but by a free trade alone that this nation “is now to be saved from impending ruin”. And the lords have in their address unanimously entered into a resolution of the same import.



Y

1774	1007	:	11	—	—	—	63920	:	10
1775	2007	:	13	—	—	—	78896	:	14
1776	1059	:	15	—	—	—	86527	—	—
1777	1734	:	7	—	—	—	114703	:	2
1778	1665	:	12	—	—	—	122755	:	15

A P P E N D I X. No. I.

Quantity of Wool, Woollen and Worsted Yarn, exported from Ireland to Great-Britain in the following Years:

Years ending the 25th of March	Wool		Yarn.			
	Stones.	lbs.	Woollen.		Worsted.	
			Stones.	lbs.	Stones.	lbs.
1764	10128 :	6	9991 :	14	139412 :	12
1765	17316 :		13450 :	12	149915 :	9
1766	21722 :	13	7980 :		152122 :	
1767	48733 :	8	7553 :		151940 :	9
1768	28521 :	11	11387 :	6	157721 :	3
1769	3840 :	16	5012 :		131365 :	2
1770	2578 :		3833 :		117735 :	9
1771	2118 :	5	4468 :	2	139378 :	14
1772	2045 :	6	5947 :		115904 :	4
1773	1839 :	2	— — —		94098 :	10
1774	1007 :	11	— — —		63920 :	10
1775	2007 :	13	— — —		78896 :	14
1776	1059 :	15	— — —		86527 — —	
1777	1734 :	7	— — —		114703 :	2
1778	1665 :	12	— — —		122755 :	15

A P P

Dra

Years ending the 25th of March

New.	
Quantity.	Value
1769	394553 49519 :
1770	462499 57812 :
1771	362096 45262 :
1772	314703 39337 :
1773	387143 48392 : :
1774	461407 57675 :
1775	465611 58201 :
1776	676485 84560 :
1777	731819 91477 :
1778	741426 92678 :

A P P E N D I X. No. II.

Drapery.

Linen Cotton.

Silk mixed manufacture.

Years ending the 25th of March

	New.		Old.		
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Value.
1769	394553	49519 : 3 : 9	207117	144982 : 8 : 6	13402 : 10 : 7
1770	462499	57812 : 7 : 6	249666	174766 : 14 : 6	20907 : 18 : 2½
1771	362096	45262 : 0 : 0	217395	152176 : 10 : 0	20282 : 5 : 8
1772	314703	39337 : 18 : 9	153566	107496 : 4 : 0	14081 : 15 : 6½
1773	387143	48392 : 17 : 6	200065	147045 : 13 : 6	20472 : 7 : 3½
1774	461407	57675 : 17 : 6	282317	197621 : 18 : 0	21611 : 10 : 3½
1775	465611	58201 : 9 : 4½	281379	196965 : 13 : 0	24234 : 16 : 9½
1776	676485	84560 : 12 : 6	290215	203150 : 10 : 0	30371 : 16 : 8½
1777	731819	91477 : 8 : 9	381330	266931 : 0 : 0	45411 : 3 : 7
1778	741426	92678 : 6 : 3	378077	264653 : 18 : 0	52675 : 1 : 11

A P P E N D I X. No. III.

An Account of the Quantity of Linen Cloth exported out of Ireland			
1730	—	3,821,188	218,220
1731	—	3,612,408	85,697
1732	—	3,591,316	137,039
1733	—	4,621,127	129,244
1734	—	5,194,241	213,250
1735	—	6,508,748	202,759
1736	—	6,168,333	262,242
1737	—	5,758,408	309,827
1738	—	4,897,169	232,947
1739	—	5,737,834	197,671
1740	—	6,403,569	183,471
1741	—	6,760,025	394,374
1742	—	6,793,009	244,546

A P P E N D I X. No. III.

An Account of the Quantity of Linen Cloth exported out of Ireland to Great-Britain and Plantations, prior to the Year 1743.

		Linen Cloth exported to	
		Great-Britain.	Plantations.
		Yards.	Yards.
Years ending the 25th of March	1705	739,278	19,742
	1706	1,325,771	62,727
	1707	1,847,564	81,037
	1708	343,359	29,606
	1709	1,539,250	113,929
	1710	1,528,185	136,844
	1711	1,131,629	89,262
	1712	1,320,968	43,011
	1713	1,721,003	86,357
	1714	2,071,814	91,916
	1715	2,000,581	133,752
	1716	1,968,568	195,825
	1717	2,260,243	151,240
	1718	2,120,075	113,790
	1719	2,233,357	117,288
	1720	2,560,113	69,579
	1721	2,398,103	95,488
	1722	3,036,431	127,134
	1723	4,060,402	112,952
	1724	3,767,063	94,816
	1725	5,755,430	70,052
	1726	4,231,676	117,213
	1727	4,596,089	151,977
	1728	4,517,152	140,049
	1729	3,701,485	183,363
	1730	3,821,188	218,220
	1731	3,612,408	85,697
	1732	3,591,316	137,039
	1733	4,621,127	129,244
	1734	5,194,241	213,250
	1735	6,508,748	202,759
	1736	6,168,333	262,242
	1737	5,758,403	309,827
	1738	4,897,169	232,947
	1739	5,737,834	197,671
	1740	6,403,569	182,471
	1741	6,760,025	394,374
	1742	6,793,009	244,546



